Advice to Com
For necessary Preparation and
provement of the
Ordina

Lords Sup

That therein true Spiritual Communion with
Christ may be obtained, and the eternal
enjoyment of God Sealed.

By *Robert Craghead* Minister of the Gos
in *L. Derry.*

Acts 2. 42. *And they continued Stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine*
and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in
1 Cor. 11. 28. *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat*
of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.
Verse 31. *For if we would judge our selves, we should not be*

The Second Edition.

G L A S G O

( )
4-BX
962

To the Right Honourable,

The Lord Provoſt, The Bailiffs, The Dean of Gild, The Deacon Conveener; And Remnant Members of the Council of the City of *Glaſgow*, &c.

And all the Inhabitants thereof.

THE unqueſtionable duty of all men, who cannot pay juſt Debt, is at leaſt to acknowledge it; eſpecially where the Debt is ſo great that the Debitor is not reſponſable: wher-

remember the good hand of God upon me in bringing me to such a refuge as Glasgow; *through so many difficulties and dangers; having stayed in* Derry *until the second day of its Siege, could not get out of the Gates without great difficulty, and forced to leave the half of my family within the Walls, by the violence of Souldiers; and the next day was taken and Robbed by the Enemies: yet coming unto you in grief, for the lamentable State of this Nation, and particular relations: found no less affectionate tenderness and care, than if I had come among so many near Relations, being suffered to want nothing necessary for this life. Many others also of this Nation do, and have reason to remember gratefully your labour of love, in their destitute condition; I can see no reason, why such seasonable compassions should be buried in oblivion; but rather should be published according to many Spiritual precedents; rendering fragrant, and perpetuating the memory of such Christian Sympathy. And though in point of modesty, some find it difficult to commend Benefactors to their face, yet find*

no less difficult to be ungrate: Your friendly reception of me at first was not all, for after ye were pleased to call me for a season, to labour in Gospel-work, your acceptance of my poor labors was yet a greater Comfort; and the Testimonies I had of affection from Magistrats, Ministers, and People, were really surprising, being conferred on so worthless a Creature: and that which added yet more to render my Lot comfortable at that time, was the exemplary Conversation of many Christians, whose knowledge and experience in Godliness was such, as gave occasion for my own edification every day.

Pardon this confidence of perfixing your honourable Names to so mean a Work; which I the rather hope to obtain, because experience of your former indulgence, hath made me thus presume, to hope for acceptance of an affectionate and obliged Testimony of gratitude; though it be but as a mite, where so many Talents are due.

And that ye may continue of one heart

and way; exemplary as hitherto, in appearing for, and promoting the Kingdom of Christ, that your labour of love may be fruit abounding to your account, that the Countenance of God may be lifted up, and his face shine on your assemblies, and that upon all the glory a defence may be created, to continue from generation to generation, is the desire of

Right Honourable,

Your obliged Servant

in the Lord

ROB. CRAGHEAD.

L. Derry,
Feb. 26. 169$\frac{4}{5}$.

TO

TO THE

Christian Reader.

BEfore this Treatise was committed to the press, it was diligently perused by some reverend and judicious Brethren here, and according to their Judgement, it deserveth a room among those printed Pieces that are of special use unto the souls of men in their greatest concerns. The name of the reverend and worthy Author thereof is so savourie unto all that truly know him, (both in the Kingdom of Ireland, *where now he is, and in this Countrey where once he was, and more especially in this City, where for a time he laboured in the Ministry with faithfulness and success) that I need testifie no more to render it acceptable unto them, but that this is the very Work of Mr.* Craghead: *and I doubt not, but who ever thou art that readest it with due attention and understanding, thou shalt find it Solid, Spiritual, and Edifying, yea, as much satisfying (with respect unto an exercised soul) as any practical Piece we have among us, upon this subject. That the Lord may bless this and all other such Essayes for the good of thy soul, is and shall be the Prayer of*

Thy servant for
Jesus sake

Ja. Brown.

Glasgow, Aug. 30. 1695.

TO

TO THE

Chriſtian Reader:

REaſon requireth, that the enſueing Diſcourſe appear with an Apology in the entry, for troubling the World with any thing new on the Lords Supper, by ſo unpoliſhed a Pen; after ſo many elaborate, and profitable Treatiſes on this ſubject, but for thy ſatisfaction know: that though I preſume not to offer any thing near ſo excellent as others, yet having occaſion to converſe with many in ſoul-diſtreſs, on the account of the Lords Supper; ſome doubting if they ſhould Partake, others troubled becauſe they did Partake, and and ſome afflicted becauſe they did not Partake: Finding alſo ſome Objections from their own mouths that have not been uſual, and becauſe they have not occurred to others, are therefore not diſcuſſed, by ſuch as have written learnedly and piouſly on this Sacrament: and being peculiarly concerned with

ſome

ſome who are thus troubled; Found it Duty to endeavour their relief, by a few particular inſtructions; Not preſuming a Treatiſe on the Lords Supper; ſo Divine and profound a ſubject, as giveth work ſufficient (if not more) to the moſt able and choice of men, if all things be conſidered, that natively belong to that Ordinance. The Lords Supper is a large and fertile Field, where diligent Reapers may yet find more and more for the gathering, both for the Comfort of Believers, and ſeaſonable warning to the Preſumptuous.

As for Believers, First, *There is an appointed meeting between Chriſt and them, the deſire of all Nations is there to be received, he who is our All, the one Pearl for which when the richeſt of Men ſell their Earthly all, yet have him freely, and for nothing: the light and glory of Heaven cometh down to us, to be the hope of glory in us. He cometh with Garments rolled in Blood, to make us know what we coſt him; And through theſe Garments, Eternal, and overcoming love ſhineth, warmeth and* [illegible]

teth the hearts of Believers. 2. Christ cometh in this Ordinance, to give Believers a hearty taste of that intimate Communion which shall hereafter be the fulness of their Joy, their Crown, and their Glory: and though now they see him but darkly, yet they know it to be himself, and not another; and when he and they shall meet again in another manner, when he shall come to receive them without a Vail on his glorious Face, they shal know it's the same blessed Face which they beheld before, but as in a Glass. How sweet to think on that meeting with Hope? Where the hope is sure, as an anchor already entred within the vail: at the first Celebration Christ willed the Communicants to raise up their hearts, to the Meditations, and joyful Expectations of that blessed Communion to come, by putting them in mind, that he and they shal drink together of the new Wine in his Fathers Kingdom. 3. Believers admitted to true Communion with him in this Ordinance, receive with himself; grace to love his fellowship, grace to hate what offereth to separat, grace to love the means of its continuance, grace to long for its perfection:

t
w
he
rec
no D
or to
belie
this, be
to Chri
depend
is not to
drop dow
assuring

t
w
i
g
p
o
n

nt
ere
vile
ould
gdoms
e Lord
es, for
ng there-
e Lord.

insist the
examina-
tion

tion before partaking at the Lords Table; which perhaps ſome may think tedious, but if it may conduce as a mean, to prevent the guilt of one poor ſoul, I ſhall not think any pains too much: as for others who find no need of ſo many & particular Examinations, they may paſs them by, and leave them to others.

Some may be apt to Object the ſame againſt ſo long diſcourſing on Communion with God: but whoſoever Objecteth this, let him conſider. First, *That Communion with Chriſt is the very Text and Subject in hand.* 2. *If Men know nothing of the Nature and Way of Communion with God; how ſhall they ſeek after it in the Sacrament.* 3. *If true Communion with Chriſt be obtained at the Lord's Table, then it ought to be Cheriſhed and Entertained in a Believers walk, for Chriſt being Received we are to Walk in him: It were great Ignorance if not Irreligious profaneneſs, to ſay that Communion with Chriſt being Obtained at his Table, we are to be no more concerned with it until the next Communion; for ſuch as are of this Opinion have juſt cauſe of Fear they never yet had Communion with Chriſt*

any where. 4. *The very happiness of men consisting in Communion with God, this being the Believers only help and comfort, and its interruptions his great loss, grief and disquiet, finding that without it he is as nothing, and for nothing but evil, I therefore wish this little hint of it may be serviceable were it for no more, but to excite others better Qualified & Blessed with more experience, to write on this Subject of Communion with God by it self, in a more full and particular manner than I have yet seen, or such a weak Person as I am able to perform.*

Some also will probably Object against the many Objections here Published, especially these Temptations mentioned, that it might be Prudence rather to conceal some of them, To which I answer. First, That many Horrid Temptations are Recorded in the Holy Scriptures, as also the Mercy of God's delivering from them Published to His Glory: *Therefore His gracious support under such Temptations, and granting frequently a Comfortable Victorie is not to be concealed.* 2 *It's necessary that People be Warned and Armed for the*

worst

worſt of Temptations, that ſo they may be fixed by the Armour of God, before they be aſſaulted. 3. Many conceal their Temptations too long, until they are ready to ſink, and are ſtill ſilent for this very Reaſon; that they hear ſo little of the Temptations of others, and therefore think there is no ſorrow like theirs, which addeth to their Affliction, whereas ſome particular Inſtructions Pertinent to their diſtreſſed Caſe, and ready at hand, might by the bleſſing of God be Uſeful, eſpecially in the beginning of their Temptations. 4. This requireth the more Publick conſideration, becauſe ſuch diſtreſſed Souls under grievous Temptations and Suggeſtions, are more Numerous than is commonly Apprehended: and theſe not only of our Perſwaſion, for I can give Inſtances of ſeveral ſober Perſons now living, and of another Perſwaſion Afflicted in like manner. 5. Let it be conſidered, that there is nothing in the following Diſcourſe for Indulging any manner of temptations, but what is ſaid is to reſiſt them in a Chriſtian manner.

The laſt thing I am to acquaint thee with, is, that this little Treatiſe being wholly practical,

tical, and designed only for help to the weaker sort of Christians, it's stile is fitted for the meaneſt, for though Controverſies cannot be Managed without words difficult to the Ignorant; yet it hath ſometimes grieved me to ſee ſome Excellent practical Books Thrown away by ſome Readers, for no other Reaſon, but that the Words were above their Reach; which I humbly Conceive ſhould be conſcientiouſly prevented, for knowing Readers can underſtand the plaineſt, but the Ignorant cannot underſtand words for which they had no Education.

That this Eſſay, notwithſtanding it's Manifold Imperfections, may Obtain thy candide reception, and that it may prove by the bleſſing of God in ſome meaſure Servicable to thy Souls great Intereſt is the deſire of

Thy Souls well wiſher and
Servant, for Chriſt's ſake.
R. C.

CHAP. I.

CHAP. I.

1 Corinthians 10. 16.

The Cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Chriſt, the Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt?

COmmunion with God is juſtly the wonder of all that obtain it, who can do little more while here but wonder, not underſtanding its value, untill the ſhaddows flee away, and they ſee his Face in a greater brightneſs: This dignity and mercy muſt be exceeding great, ſeing the Blood of him who is God was ſhed for its Purchaſe, 'the juſt ſuffering for the unjuſt, to 'bring us to God, 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. But when his ſervants ſhall ſerve him, and ſee his Face, and thereby themſelves be made to ſhine in their Father's Kingdom, then ſhall the glory of that love which contrived, and the glory of that love which purchaſed this Communion, be celebrated in another manner: Yet this Communion being begun on earth, we muſt according to the meaſure given, aim at the celebration of the glory of this love, in the manner required by himſelf, who hath inſtituted this Sacrament of the Lords Supper for a memorial of his love, in humbling himſelf unto death; requiring this his death to be ſhewed forth until he come again, and allowing his people ſuch Cõmunion with himſelf in this Ordinance, as ſhall be to them a Seal for their eternal Enjoyment of him, when he cometh again to receive them to himſelf.

The Bleſſings of this Ordinance are ſo great; that its our

 mercy

mercy we have its inſtitution, its ſeveral parts, the ſignification of each part, the manner of acting on our part, and the benefits to the believing receiver. All particularly recorded. And in the words of this Text we have all theſe bleſsings ſummed up in our obtaining Communion with Chriſt, for he being ours, all is curs.

The connexion of this verſe with the Words immediatly preceeding is not ſo very obvious, as the ſcope will make it appear, for what end the Lords ſupper is here mentioned.

The *Apoſtle* is giving ſeaſonable warning to theſe believing *Corinthians*, now eminent for gifts, to take heed leſt they fall, verſe 12. For which end he gives them to underſtand that the People of God of old, were priviledged above all other People, with ſignal teſtimonies of Gods peculiar favour, they were under the Cloud, miraculouſly carried through the red *Sea*, did eat the ſame ſpiritual meat, and drink the ſame ſpiritual drink: And all theſe mercies by Chriſt the rock that followed them; Yet with many of them God was not well pleaſed: And among other evils whereby God was provocked, their early Idolatry was moſt provocking: Therefore ſaith the *Apoſtle*, 'flee from Idolatry, verſe 14. And propoſeth this Text as an Argument againſt Participation with Idolaters, in their Idolatrous ſervice; For ſaith he, ye have ſolemnly profeſſed Chriſt, and communion with him, in the Sacrament of his Supper; and therefore muſt renounce all Worſhip, that's inconſiſtent with the ſaid Profeſsion, and Communion; Such as the Sacrifices of the Gentiles being but Sacrifices of Devils, &c. 'And ye cannot drink of the Cup 'of the Lord, and the Cup of Devils, ver. 21. Now that this Ordinance is ſuch a ſolemn profeſſed Communion with Chriſt, he aſſerteth as undeniable by this Interrogation is it not, &c. Making the *Affirmative* ſtrong, being ſuch as themſelves could not deny.

In the words we have theſe four things. First the general Nature of this holy Sacrament, that is, the ſigns of divine Inſtitution, and the promiſed Bleſsing thereto appertaining. 2 Both the ſigns diſtinctly deſcribed, and both to be made

made use of by Believers. 3. The great and great benefit of communion with Christ represented by these Symbols. 4. That in Order to a Believers participation of Christs Body and Blood, these visible signs must be blessed and set apart for that holy use, the Apostle here beginneth with the Cup, where we are to consider four things, First, what is understood by the cup, Secondly, how it's called a cup of blessing, Thirdly, how it's said to be the cup which we bless, Fourthly, that the cup blessed is the Communion of the blood of Christ.

For the first, the cup signifieth the Wine in the cup, and the Wine representeth Christs blood; and therefore evidently a figurative speech; *Mat.* 26. 27. 'And he took the cup, and 'gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it, for 'this is my blood of the new Testament, &c. And *Luke* 22. 20. 'This cup is the new Testament in my blood. So that by the cup is set forth the precious blood of Christ the price of our Redemption, *Ephes.* 1.7. 'In whom we have Redemption 'through his blood. And 1 *Cor.* 6. 20. 'Ye are bought with a Price.

Secondly, It's the cup of blessing; being indeed a cup of Salvation, full of blessings to the believing Receiver, being blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, *Ephesians* 1. 3. The cursed made blessed; and the guilty made righteous. Next it's the cup of blessings or praises, the Word also signifying giving thanks, for hereby the blessings of many ready to perish come upon the Redeemer, who loved and gave himself for them.

Thirdly, It's the cup which we bless; the cup must be blessed, and set apart for representing of that precious blood: Therefore we find that Christ blessed it; he took the cup, and gave thanks; the benefit of which is yet to be expected by believers. Secondly, and his servants by office, who in his name administer this Ordinance, and give the cup, pray for this blessing, and in his name bless and set apart the cup for this sacred use; that it may be to the Partakers by Christs blessing the communion of his blood; which is,

The fourth thing to be considered. The communion of his Blood; The word signifieth Common or Communicable to others giving and receiving, as 1 *Tim.* 6. 18. *Willing to Communicate*; It's the same word, So there is giving on Christs part, and receiving by the Believer which is this communion of his Blood; so the same word is translated fellowship, 1 *Cor.* 1. 9. 'You are called unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Believers having most intimate fellowship with Christ, they in him, and Christ dwelling in their hearts by Faith, So the word is also translated Partaking, 2 *Pet.* 1 4. 'That by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, that is to have Communion with the Divine nature: and possibly it had been as safe to have translated it Communion or Fellowship, as partaking, for some weak people have mistaken that Expression (partaking of the Divine nature) and overstretched it, to whom fellowship with the Divine Nature had been more plain, as the word is translated, 1 *John* 1. 3. 'Our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ. The Cup here is said to be the Communion of his Blood, that is the Cup being blessed according to Divine Institution, and made use of by the believing Receiver, he partakes of the benefit of Christ's Blood, his Death and Purchase, he hath Communion with Christ crucified, his death being for him, and in his stead; he is said to be crucified with Christ, *Gal.* 2. 20. satisfying the Justice of God, in and by Christ crucified, and so hath the Communion of his Blood.

The next visible sign is the Bread, where these three things are to be noted, first, that it's bread. Secondly, Bread broken, and Thirdly, that this Bread broken is the Communion of Christs Body.

For the first, Bread is made use of by our Redeemer, as that which is necessary for preserving the life of man, and therefore fit to signifie and represent the Bread of life, Christ is our spiritual food, his flesh meat indeed, *Joh.* 6. 55. *Secondly*, It's not any Bread but this Bread blessed and set apart for this representation, *Matth.* 26 26. 'As they were eating, Jesus took Bread and blessed it. *Thirdly*, After it's blessed, it remaineth still

ſtill Bread, the Apoſtle doth not ſay the Body which we break, but the Bread which we break; now the Bread is not broken before, but after it's bleſſed, for he took Bread and bleſſed it, and brake, and the Apoſtle ſaith expreſly it's Bread which is broken! but if after the bleſſing or conſecration, the Bread were tranſubſtantiated into the natural Body of Chriſt, then the *Apoſtle* had ſaid the Body which we break: Sure the Apoſtle knew what name to give it, having received of the Lord what he delivereth, and what can be more plain, than that it's ſtill Bread when it's broken, which is after its conſecration; This breaking of the Bread is ſo material a part of the inſtitution, that the whole of the Sacrament bear its name called the breaking of Bread, *Act* 2 42. The breaking of Chriſts precious Body being thereby ſignified, Chriſt requireth this diſcerning of his Body, broken, ſaying, 'this is my Body which is broken for you, 1 *Cor.* 11. 24. And the breaking of the Bread muſt be ſacramentally and publickly performed in ſight of the Communicants, for their inſtruction, as in the firſt Celebration.

And in the laſt place, the ſincere Believer in eating of this Bread according to Chriſts Inſtitution, doth by Faith receive himſelf, hath ſpecial Communion with him, and partakes the benefits and purchaſe made through the offering of the Body of Jeſus Chriſt once for all, *Heb.* 10. 10. This is the Sacrifice he came to give, when no other could do; and therefore its Memorial ſhould be alwayes fragrant.

Many pertinent Doctrines may be here obſerved, both from the ſcope and words of this Text, but I ſhall name only this one.

Doct. The worthy receiver at the Lords Table hath Communion with Chriſt, in partaking the benefit of his precious blood, and broken Body.

From this great and comfortable truth, theſe ten inferences following appear native, which ſhall be the ſubject matter of the enſuing Diſcourſe. First inference the Celebration of of the Lords Supper, being an holy Tranſaction between Chriſt and Believers, wherein they have the Communion of his Body and Blood, then the Doctrine of Chriſt concern-

ing himself, what he is, what he hath done and suffered, should be firmly believed as a foundation for our partaking of this blessed commonion.

2. Inference, the Lords Supper being the Communion of Christs Body and Blood to the Believer: then all who partake are obliged to prepare for so great a blessing, particularly to examine themselves before they eat.

3. This blessed Ordinance of Christ, being the Communion of his Body and Blood; Then Communicants are to approach it with a humble sense of their sin; as needing the vertue of that precious Blood.

4. The worthy Receiver obtaining the Communion of Christs Body and Blood. Then Communicants are obliged to understand what that is which is called Communion with Christ before they partake.

5. Seing such blessed and near Communion with Christ may be obtained at the Lords Table: Then Communicants should prepare for Entertaining Communion with him in the very time of that Solemnity.

6. This blessed Ordinance of the Lords Supper, being the Communion of Christs Body and Blood: then Believers are obliged to have a sincere desire to partake of so great a mercy.

7. This holy ordinance, being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood: Then believers should approach it, with Faith, and expectation of this blessed Communion with Christ.

8. Seing so great a benefit as the Communion of Christ's body and Blood, may be had in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper: Then Christians are obliged to endeavour the removal of all objections, and stumbling blocks that stand in the way, to obstruct them partaking of this benefit.

9. This holy Sacrament, being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood: Then after partaking, Communicants are obliged to try if they have obtained that blessed Communion.

10. This holy Ordinance, being the communion of Christ's Body and Blood: Then Communicants are obliged to live suit-

suitable to so great a benefit, and testifie their gratitude, by an holy walk and conversation.

CHAP. II.

The Doctrine of Christ Crucified, must be believed by Communicants.

The first Inference,

THe celebration of the Lord's Supper, being an holy transaction between Christ and Believers; wherein they have the Communion of his Body and Blood, then the doctrine of Christ concerning himself, what he is, what he hath done, and suffered, should be firmly believed, as a foundation for our partaking of this blessed Communion.

For if the Doctrine unto which this Sacrament belongeth, and whereupon it dependeth, be doubted, such also will our partaking be, not in faith, but doubting; therefore all concerned, who have a due value for their Souls, are to labour for fixedness, in the great Gospel truths concerning Christ, and the way of obtaining Communion with him. I shall God willing make this appear, in this *Chapter*, and conclude it with a few words of advice to such Communicants as have most need of greater establishment in the truth.

Consider first, that mens professing of Gospel truths is not sufficient proof, that they believe these truths, for many profess that which they do not believe, having no firm perswasion of these truths, in their own minds; but stand yet in need of being taught, which be the first principles of the oracles of God, even after such profession, and opportunities of knowledge, that they might have been teachers of others, *Heb.* 5. 12.

2. Nor is want of doubts concerning these truths, sufficient evidence, that they are firmly believed, for the want of doubts doth not always proceed from fixedness in faith, but sometimes from being unconcerned, whether the Doctrine be

true or false, not being so serious, as either to believe, or doubt.

3. Nor is it sufficient, that People have an implicite Faith in what concerneth their Salvation, because their Teachers instruct them so, and they so receive, having nothing against it: because men may be easily shaken out of that sort of Faith; and therefore we are to receive the Doctrine of Christ, 1 *Thes.* 2. 13. 'Not as the word of men, (but as it is in truth) the word of God. Particularly, first, if we do not believe there was and is a Christ, we cannot converse with him, for who can seek Communion with one of whose very being they doubt? Would to God all professed Christians, believed in heart firmly; that there is a Christ, as our merciful God, hath given us full evidence for our belief. 2. If we do not believe that he is God and Man, God manifest in the flesh, we cannot have communion with him, as such, and if we have not communion with him as such, then we have not communion with the true Christ, the Mediator and sent Savior of the World. 3. If we do not believe, that he really died, then we can have no Communion of his body and blood, not believing that his blood was shed. 4. If we do not believe that this his death, and offering himself a sacrifice to the justice of God, for these who were given him of his Father, was accepted of God, then we cannot lay the burden of our sins upon and trust our Souls to that Sacrifice. 5. If we do not believe, that God hath provided a way for our partaking of that Sacrifice, and the benefits thereby purchased; then we cannot believe a participation and Fellowship of his sufferings. 6. And if we know nothing of that appointed way, *viz.* by Faith, then we cannot make application of his death, and so shall not have the Communion of his body and blood. And that the necessity of firm believing the Doctrine of Christ may appear, Consider;

First, That we may see with grief, how many turn Apostates, Atheists, and Blasphemers, who were professed Christians, and appeared to have no doubt of what they professed, for many years, yet by frequent Apostacy men souls are ruined,

ruined, Religion reproached, and Satans kingdom advanced.

2. It's found alſo, that others of a better ſtamp, who do not precipitate themſelves into ſuch Gulfs of *Apoſtacy*, improving the benefit of a good Education, their practice being in ſome meaſure according to their Knowledge: Yet in progreſs of years, when they come to be more deeply concerned with their eternal ſtate, and to know on what grounds they can warrantably expect to be no worſe, but better, when this Life hath its Period; Searching into theſe grounds, do often find ſuch difficulties to believe the Truths whereof they doubted nothing in their younger years, that their Souls are caſt into deep *Diſquiet*, and ſometimes are made to bleſs God who hath kept them alive, and under means of knowledge, that they may yet be confirmed in ſome important Truths, which nearly concern their very Salvation. And notwithſtanding that conſcientious Chriſtians, are cautious and ſparing in uttering their doubts, ſpecially, when they are ſuch as might prove ſtumbling to others; yet where the benefit of Cordial Sympathy is obtained, many are found under diſtreſsing Conflicts of this Nature, in ſo much that if their gracious God, did not relieve, they could not ſtand long in their profeſsion, but would be noticed to their grief as fainting: Such temptations have not yet left this World, 'in vain, I have waſhed my hands in *In*-'nocency, *Pſal.* 73. 13.

3. It's alſo too evidently found, that ſome by reaſon of not being fixed in the great Goſpel Truths concerning Chriſt, and ſalvation, are retarded in their whole Chriſtian progreſs: for the Foundation not being firmly laid, they cannot go on to perfection, this is no Charge againſt the Foundation which God hath laid; for that is ſtill ſure and unmoveable, 1 *Cor.* 3. 11. 'For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt. For which we are to bleſs God, but it's mens not being fixed upon, and cemented with the true foundation: And whether men will or not, this hath a ſecret, ſtrong influence to deaden all their religious practice, when they doubt but all their pains may be in vain at laſt,

and

'and that they have been but beating the Air, 1 *Cor.* 9. 26.

4. Some are assaulted with violent Temptations, tempting them to doubt of many truths at once; and such as are of great consequence; and then their weakness appeareth, hen they smart bitterly, for not being established in the truth, having no solid answer for repelling of such temptations, then they are tossed to and fro with any wind of Doctrine, yea, many woes are at hand, then they are ready to call good evil, and evil good, and put darkness for light, then they are ready to run down the stream, and yield all, were it not, that God knoweth how to deliver his own out of temptation, 2 *Peter* 2. 9.

5. Known instances may be given of some who in their day shined to the glory of God, and edification of many, who yet not long before their great change found it their greatest tryal and difficulty, to be fixed in believing, even as to the object of their faith: which should be remarked as a warning to weaker persons to spend more of our time and seriousness for rooting in the truth, 'that we may know whom we have believed, which was the Apostles great rejoicing, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12.

6. It's also to be observed, that especially at communions doubts do arise in many of the People of God, when they are examining their Faith and Knowledge, and Satan alwayes going about to resist good, laboring to obstruct the best works (whereof self-examination is one) instead of questioning their own weakness in knowledge or slowness to believe, he tempteth them to doubt of the object of their faith: and if not fixed they are at lest so disturbed in their Souls, and cast down, that they have no confidence for going to the Lords Table: and supposing they were not afflicted with such temptations, yet if Fundamentals Gospel-truths be not understood, nor a judicious assent of the mind yielded to them; then there can be no consent. An assent of the mind may be to the truth without consent, but we cannot chuse and consent to that which the mind doth not believe to be truth. So then you cannot consent to receive Christ at his Table, except ye believe the report and testimony that God

hath

God hath given of him, 1 *John* 5. 10. Therefore ſpare no pains for knowledge, dig for it as for hid Treaſures, account the knowledge of Chriſt excellent knowledge, as others did who knew him better than you, who did look upon other things as but loſs and dung, *Phil.* 3. 8. Thou haſt none to know like him, nor any knowledge ſo neceſſary as to know him, 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. Who is made of God unto us Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, & Redemption, be not too eaſily ſatisfied with thy knowledge of Chriſt, as many in this age are: Let it be an exerciſe of thy ſoul by its ſelf, how to know Chriſt, leſt thy firſt knowledge of him be as of a Judge to give out ſentence, Depart, I know you not: lay this to heart, though thou had not the Lords Table to go to, but if thou wilt go to it Ignorant of him, Ignorance it ſelf will render thee an unworthy Communicant, as I fear it doth too many in our times, who yet cannot be judicially debarred; what if thy own Conſcience ſhould raiſe upon thee when thou art going to his Table, and accuſe thee of preſumption, for attempting a Communion with him, to whom thou art a meer ſtranger, not ſo much as believing the record God hath given of his Son? Can ſuch a perſon be accepted of him? Labour then to be acquainted with him in time, *Job* 22. 21. Acquaint thy ſelf with him rendering praiſe to God, that thou has yet a ſeaſon for it: and if thou doſt not affect Ignorance; but art one who longeſt for the knowledge of the Holy, fearing thou art the very perſon that has not that knowledge, *Prov.* 30. 3. Fearing the danger of thy Soul, were it for nothing elſe, but thy Ignorance of Chriſt, fearing alſo to go to the Lords Table on the ſame account, then Conſider;

Firſt, all the true knowledge thou canſt have of Chriſt, and the Doctrine of Salvation by him, is ſupernatural, thou canſt not dig it out of thy ſelf, 'None knoweth the Son, but he to 'whom it is revealed, *Matth.* 11. 27. And when *Peter* giveth an account of his knowledge of Chriſt, he is told, *Matth.* 16. 17. 'fleſh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee: Then thy work is to pray for this knowledge what ever other means thou uſe, thou muſt have it as a free Gift, 1 *Joh.* 5. 20.

He

He hath given us an understanding to know him that is true, it's also given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom, *Matth.* 13. 11. despond not, though this day thou art very Ignorant of Christ, and the mysteries of his Kingdom, it may be thou has too much depended on thy own understanding, and not prayed for a given understanding; the neglect of this keepeth many in ignorance, for though we sometimes grieve, because we are ignorant; yet we are naturally so proud, that we had rather have it of our selves, than take it as a free gift of God: but take his counsel, who saith, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally, *Jam.* 1. 5. Blessed Jesus Christ is sent to open the eyes of the blind, *Isa.* 42. 7. Let him have his work, beseech him to open thy eyes, he will not fail to perform what he came for, if thou wilt sincerly acknowledge thy blindness, remember what he saith, *Joh.* 9. 41. 'If you were blind ye should have no sin,' take it then as a great mercy to be sensible of thy blindness, it being the surest way to the best light.

2. Consider also that there are degrees, both of knowledge and faith, though thou come not up to the first worthies, yet thou may'st be no unworthy Communicant if Christ has so manifested himself unto thee, that thou canst not live contentedly without him? If what thou hast discovered of him hath captivated thy soul? If thou lovest all thou knowest of him? And followest on to know more? Though thou seest not him flying in that glorious brightness, that some did on the Mount, yet Christ will come and meet with thee waiting for him, though at the foot of the Mount, he will come down to thee, when thou canst not go up to him, and he will be as good as his word, in manifesting himself to all who love him, and keep his words, though he do not manifest himself in a like manner to all, we must be glad to see him though thorow a lates's; if so be we are sure it's he, the very Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the World; any sure knowledge of him, any manner of his manifesting himself, should be highly valued, for where he manifesteth himself, there will he come and make an abode, *John* 14. 23.

3. I

3. It deſerveth a ſpecial remark, that though the Diſciples continued long weak in their Knowledge, confeſsing their Ignorance that they knew nor the way, *John* 14 5. And ſometimes that they knew not what he ſaid, *John* 16. 18. And as yet they knew not the Scripture, 'that he muſt riſe again, *John* 20. 9. They were not ſo fully confirmed as afterward, yet as to the ſtate of their Souls, Chriſt declareth them clean, *John* 15. 3. And admitted them to his Table, yea, and giveth a comfortable account of them to his Father, *John* 17.25. 'And theſe have known, that thou haſt ſent me, and ver. 6. 'they have kept thy Word. O! the depth of his love and faithfulneſs; Firſt, to open the eyes of the blind, and reveal his Father unto them, and then though they ſee but darkly, to give this comfortable account of them, 'Father, they have known: What piercing eyes hath Chriſt, to obſerve the good as well as the evil of his People, and to bring forth a little of his own fine Gold from under vaſt Rubbiſh, and make it ſhine before his Father, as Fruit of the travel of his Soul. Let not the Reader miſtake, in making a bad uſe of this, to his own hurt, in preſuming without ſome competent knowledge: For by Chriſts teſtimony it's evident, the Diſciples had knowledge, only Chriſts condeſcenſions muſt not be concealed, in allowing his Table to ſuch as were but weak; that others in ſucceeding generations grieved for their weakneſs, might not deſpond; ſince it is not the altogether perfect that Chriſt expecteth at this lower Table, but at the higher: where that unknown, that reſerved new Wine may be drunk without danger, *Matth.* 26. 29. I might here alſo add, that Believers ſometimes have a real Knowledge of theſe Goſpel-Myſteries, which themſelves think they know not: As for Inſtance, *John* 14 4. 'and whither I go, ye know: but in the next verſe, *Thomas* denieth both, ſaying, we know not whether thou goeſt; and how can we know the way? this contradicteth what Chriſt had ſaid, he ſaying, ye know, and *Thomas* ſaying, we know not: Now what Chriſt ſaid, is infallibly true, and needed not that any ſhould teſtifie of man, for he knew what was in man,

John

Joh. 2. 25. And it was very ill manners in the good Man, to contradict his Master, and little better, than gave him the lie in his face: Who would bear such things as meek Jesus doth! The man should have well pondered the words spoken by Christ, as certainly true, because he spoke them, and should have rendered praise for his discovering that in himself, and others which they could not observe; and thereby allowing them comfort as to their knowledge: but as he, so some Christians yet take a sinful liberty, to deny the goodness of God to their souls, by a mismanaged, I will not say pretended kind of humility: when some reflect on their knowledge, and find it mixt with darkness, and indistinct; How ready are they to conclude, and say they have no knowledge: Whereas Christ may have other thoughts of them, for his thoughts are not their thoughts, *Isa.* 55. 8.

Fifthly, Yet by all means, study to grow in grace and knowledge, *the hand of the diligent maketh rich*: It's very observable, that some Christians are more obnoxious to doubts, than others, and find them a great hinderance to their spiritual advancement; yet when they set themselves to Diligence, in observing Christs Works in them, and for them, and the sweet harmony betwixt his Word and Works, do often get their doubts cleared, their Fetters fall off, and then they run, and not weary, knowing they run not in vain: When the Disciples attend diligently to Christ's Words, then they come to say chearfully, 'Now we believe, and are sure, *John* 16. 30.

Sixthly, Be diligent, to practise what ye know, *John* 7. 17. If any man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self. Hearken carefully to this counsel, as thou would be confirmed in the truth, for our not practising what we know clearly; provoketh God to give us no more light, since we improve not what we have.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Self examination required of all, before Partaking.

THE ſecond inference, is, that the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; being the Communion of Chriſts Body and Blood to the believer; then all who partake, are oblidged to prepare for ſo great a Bleſſing; particularly, to examine themſelves, before they eat.

I ſhall therefore, by the Lords help. Firſt, Give ſome reaſons, why this Examining a mans ſelf, muſt not be omitted. 2. Anſwer ſome objections made againſt it. 3. Shew the manner, how it ought to be performed. And in the laſt place, Point at theſe heads, wherein we are chiefly to examine our ſelves, before we partake.

For the Firſt, The reaſons, why every man ſhould examine before he eat, are theſe.

Firſt, It's expreſly Commanded, 1 *Cor.* 11. 28. 'Let a man 'examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat. Here is no exception of one by another, and therefore we ſhould make none. It's not ſaid, let a poor ignorant man examine himſelf, but men of knowledge need not; it's not ſaid, let a man examine himſelf, the firſt time he receives only, but whenſoever he is to eat, let him examine himſelf. Therefore the neglect of this one Duty, will render a man guilty before God, take care how ye enter the work, if ye go out of the road in the beginning of the way, you ſhall not eaſily know where to fall into it again.

2. The tranſaction betwixt Chriſt, and partakers of the Lords Supper, is of the greateſt importance for a mans ſoul, for either he ſhall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, by unworthy receiving, or be bleſſed with the Seal of God for his eternal happineſs, if he truely receive Chriſt: Therefore, previous examination is moſt neceſſary.

3. It's Gods great mercy to our ſouls, that he requireth this

this Duty of examining our ſelves; and therefore should not be lookt upon as a burden, but a mean for preventing our ruine; for if after examination, you find your ſelves in the bond of iniquity, and in the broad way to the Pit; It's your mercy to know it, before you feel it: Can you in cold blood, think it adviſeable, that the Pit be your firſt wakening! When the unquenchable flames of Gods wrath are about you, are ye reſolved to underſtand the ſtate of your ſoul no other way? Can this be the way of Wiſdom? Can you approve it? And if you cannot in your own conſcience approve it, but knows it to be a ſinful, and dangerous neglect: why then will you take a young Hell in your breaſt, to the old? Why do you prepare ſuch a gnawing Worm as this will be? That here is a man, who never had ſo much regard to *Heaven*, or fear of Hell, as to enquire, which of them he was going to.

On the other hand, if after examination, ye ſhall find any thing of true Grace, the leaſt grain of that fine Gold tried in the Fire, though covered with much rubbish, if any love of Chriſt, and Holineſs; though but as a ſmoaking Flax: would not the comfort abundantly compenſe thy pains, canſt thou deny it? If Chriſt hath given thee grace, is it not worth the looking on, that thou mayeſt at leaſt give him thanks for it? Search therefore diligently, for thou knoweſt not the many bleſſings that may attend a conſcientious Examination, *Pſal.* 119. 59. 'I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet to thy Teſtimonies.

4. We are naturally inclined to flatter our ſelves in our iniquity, *Pſal.* 36. 2. 'He flattereth himſelf in his own eyes, and if we could, to deceive and flatter God with our lips; And therefore are obliged to make a diligent ſearch, leſt we vainly think we ſtand in need of nothing, when we are wretched and naked, *Rev.* 3. 17.

We may think that we live, and have a name that we live, and yet God finds us Dead *Rev.* 3. 1.

What Woe of Woes, what a coſtly deluſion to the poor Soul, if ſtill among the Dead, and at laſt under the ſecond Death, and the poor man has no more to ſay, but I thought I

was

was alive in my Soul, and many others thought so of me? I thought that I might be as welcome to the Lords Table, as any Christian was there, I thought my self more upright than many of them, my heart said so to me, I many times thought their many prayers, Whinings, Groanings, Doubts, and examining themselves, was either but Hypocrisie, or vain Labour? But now iniquity hath found me out, I cannot now have one hour for the Work I despised, night is come, I cannot now see how to work, Night is come without hope of a morning: Be wise then, as to your latter End; for the time is at hand, when men will need no Examinations: you will be all at a point in a few Years, and eternally fixed in your Lot.

5. If people will not be at pains to examine themselves before a Communion, they will easily neglect it at other times, and so are apt to live out of this Duty while they live; when men become so impudent as to face the Lords Table, not observing his Direction, and the manner how to approach it, the Direction being peremptory. But let a man examine himself: So that albeit there be a reluctancy to this profitable Duty; yet this should constrain to it, as we would not profane the holy things of God: and when people make Conscience of it, though the Sacrament be in its own nature a confirming Ordinance; yet this previous examination hath been signally blessed of God, being the very time and mean of awakening many out of their secure sleep in their Sins. I know many at this day now exemplary in holiness, who can declare that preparation for Communions in their younger years, was the very time their hearts were first engaged to Christ and his ways.

6. Some without due examination take up an opinion, that they have no grace, no Title to Christ, or his Table; and so deprive themselves of that benefit: This opinion was not the result of serious Examination, but rather a temptation to obstruct both their Duty, and Mercy; and this becometh both a Sin, and snare to them, a sin, because they have not followed Gods Directions in knowing the very state of their Souls, and a Snare being thereby barred up from their

ſpiritual good; therefore, this Self-examination is moſt neceſſary every way.

Notwithſtanding of the many clear and ponderous Reaſons for this examining before partaking of the Lords Supper, yet ſome object againſt it, as,

Firſt, I know my ſouls condition ſo well already, that I am reſolved not to Communicate; and therefore it would be to me but an unprofitable toil, and therefore I will leave that Work to ſuch as intend to receive.

Anſw. By what Rule can, or dare ye reſolve not to partake, before ye take the way of Gods appointment to examine firſt, and then determine? Is it not juſt with God, to leave you to your own counſels, ſince ye will not follow his? Is your method better than Gods? Your way is either for never Communicating, or never to Communicat aright; for if you will not examine, ye ſhall not Communicat aright: Dare you ſay, that any of Gods Commands are unprofitable, whoſe Commands are for our good always, *and in keeping of them is great reward. Pſal.* 19. 11. Will ye joyn with theſe impudent wretches, who ſay, *what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, Mal.* 3. 14. But when ye ſay it's tedious, then ye ſpeak your heart, and diſcover the root of your objection, even as the Sluggard, *he will be undone, and ſlain if he go out to his work*, Prov. 22. 13. *The ſlothful man ſaith there is a lion without, I ſhal be ſlain in the ſtreets*; yet no other ſeeth this lion in the way, but the ſluggard.

2. *Object.* I know I am a Believer, and all Believers will be ſaved, and have a right to the Lords Table, what needeth more ſearching?

Anſw. If ye know it, the leſs labour in examining will ſerve, and if it be as you ſay, you are the moſt inexcuſable for this neglect, and do fooliſhly requite the Lord for his bountiful dealing, and gracious obliging you to all chearful obedience; If your faith be ſo clear already, what harm to bring it to the light, ſpecially in a ſeaſon when the Lord requireth the trying of it.

2. Do you know before you try, that your Faith is not dead?

Do

Do ye conſider the direful conſequents of a miſtake in this? *Is not the tryal of your faith more precious than that of gold*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 7. Are ye become wiſer than the Apoſtle *James*, who inſiſteth ſo much in the diſcoverie of precious juſtifying Faith, that it may be diſcriminate from a deluſive dead Faith? which leaveth its owner dead in his ſins, *Jam.* 2. 17, 18, 19.

3 *Object.* I acknowledge it a duty to examine my ſelf, but it's ſuch a Duty as I am not able to manage, I find my ſelf incapable of any advantage by it, for when ever I Eſſay it, I can come to no concluſion, as to the ſtate of my Soul.

Anſw. If you give up with all holy duties that are difficult, then take heed that ye do not next give up with the way to Heaven, for it is a narrow way as Chriſt hath told us; and if you take a Liberty to ſtep aſide always when you find it narrow, how do you think to get through it? if you muſt needs have an eaſie way? it is very eaſie to find it in the Broad way leading to deſtruction, you will have plenty of fellow-travellours there, who all love it becauſe it is eaſie: Are not all Holy Duties difficult to perform becauſe of the Perverſeneſs of our natures? ſhall we therefore abandon them all? Do ye judge it beſt to give over Prayer, Meditation, Watchfulneſs, Mortification, Plucking out the right Eye, &c. And all becauſe it is not eaſie to perform them aright; why then ſhould ye neglect to examine your ſelves, which is an hand-maid and furtherance to ſeriouſneſs in all Duties? but ſtill you ſay it is a Dutie ye cannot perform.

Anſw. For your help who are willing, but are Diſcouraged by your weakneſs to perform it to advantage; firſt Pray that God would determine your heart to ſo clear a Dutie, that you may be in Suſpenſe no longer whether to perform it or not, and Pray for aſſiſtance to it's profitable management.

2. Allow for ſo great a work convenient time, and place, that thou mayeſt not be Diverted, nor the Work Hurried over ſuperficiallie for want of time to attend it, which manie are Guiltie of who are too Prodigal of time otherways. A *Heathen* could teach us that we ſhould not Complain ſo much of having little time, as that we loſe much; you know how much

time is often waſted on very Trifles, and worſe: Let ſecuring of your Eternal State have at leaſt ſome ſhare, otherways your laſt farewell to time may be very bitter: when Death ſhall ſay not a Moment longer is my commiſſion, though poſſibly thy Conſcience tell thee ſome time muſt be taken to Examine, the Scriptures require it, Miniſters preſs it, and it is the Cuſtom of all who have any ſeeming ſeriouſneſs, and Conſcience, it's mouth muſt be ſtopt leſt it be Clamourous; but then the time allowed is ſo ſcant that nothing is duely Pondered, and ſo it turns to a Name of nothing.

3. As thou art to allow Competent time, ſo alſo due ſeriouſneſs is neceſſary, that it may be ſuitable to the work in hand, 'Examine your ſelves, know you not your own ſelves, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. Remember you have a deceitful heart to ſearch, the deceitfulneſs of ſin is ſuch as to hide it ſelf in a ſearching time, but you are now to find out Gods Enemies, and your own, you are now to Try Titles whoſe you are, Chriſt's or the Devils, what Title you have to Chriſt's Feaſt of love, do you love or hate him, hath he cloathed you with a Garment of Salvation, that you may ſit down with Confidence at his Table or not: If theſe things be ſtill trifled over, know that the time is at hand when thou wilt be more ſerious than thou deſireſt: ſerious I ſay, in Hopeleſs Terrours: The God of *Mercy* have pity upon a kind of *Infidel* Chriſtians in this Age, who do not, and will not Believe what is coming, though Chriſt hath often given warning, yea, five times together in one place; *Mark.* 9. 43. &c. 'That the Worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; and that for not being ſerious and painful in the Duties of Religion.

4. *When thou doſt examine thy ſelf*, fix upon a ſufficient rule, not thy own imginations, but the word of God, the Law and Teſtimony. *Iſa.* 8. 20. 'Bring forth the hidden works of darkneſs to this light, for they muſt ſhortly be made manifeſt: But if thou ſhalt ſay then, I may end my Examining work when they begin, for I have nothing to ſtand before that light, my beſt works are but darkneſs where that Lamp ſhineth, I cannot anſwer for one of a Thouſand of my ways.

Anſw. Thou haſt no other ſafe Rule, for if thou advanceſt either

either thy own Opinion of thy ſelf, or the Opinion of others as a Rule, thou art nothing the wiſer, for theſe may deceive thee and do deceive many, ſome thinking they are rich when they are poor, *Rev.* 3. 17.

And ſome have by the Opinion of others, a Name that they live, but Chriſt ſayeth they are dead. *Rev.* 3. 1. 'Whether 'canſt thou go, but to the word of his lips, who looketh upon 'things that are equal, from whom thy ſentence muſt come. *Pſal.* 17. 2. 4. But *Secondly*, when thou conſidereſt Scripture Precept, conſider alſo Scripture Condeſcenſion, or Gods gracious Condeſcenſion there revealed, as when the Scripture ſaith, curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them, *Gal.* 3. 10. Yet the ſame Scripture of Truth ſaith, 'Chriſt was made a 'curſe for us. *v.* 13. *1o John* 3. 18. He that believeth not, is con-'demned already. *But Rom.* 8. There is no condemnation to 'them who are in Chriſt Jeſus: Obſerve alſo that God accepteth of ſincerity where obedience to the precept is not perfect. John 17. 6. *They have kept thy Word*, yet their obedience was evidently Imperfect, Therefore let not this break up thy work, that thou haſt nothing ſuitable to the purity of Gods Law, neither conclude thy ſelf graceleſs, becauſe thou doeſt not that which thou wouldeſt in obedience to God, *Rom.* 7. 19.

5. Beware of inſufficient marks or evidences either of a gracious or graceleſs State, for thou mayeſt deceive thy ſelf either of the wayes: It's not a ſufficient Mark of Grace, thou takeſt delight ſometimes in approaching to God, as *Iſa.* 58. 2. Nor great appearances, *if there be no root.* Matth. 13. 5. *forthwith they ſpring up*, the appearance may be ſuch, as beholders may take notice there is a great change, the ſeed ſpringeth up, then appears a freſh green field, that appeared not before, yet no ſound Root; none of the uncorruptible ſeed which ſpringeth up to life Eternal. Thou mayeſt be again and again aſhamed of thy ſin, and confeſs it as *Saul*, yet no Godly ſorrowing on the account of ſin it ſelf, you may alſo have the out ſide clean and whited beyond others, and yet be but whited Sepulchres, nothing within but death, what is whiter

than a dunghill covered over with Snow? but when the Snow is gone the dunghill appears as it was.

On the other hand, it is not ſafe for a Chriſtian when he examineth his Souls State, to take the higheſt degrees of Grace which hath been attained by the Saints, and makes them the only Evidences of true Graces, as *Pauls Wish*, *Rom.*9 3. 'For 'I could wiſh that my ſelf were accurſed from Chriſt for my 'my brethren, my kinſmen according to the fleſh. There is no ground to think that is recorded as a Mark whereby everie Chriſtian muſt Try if he be in a ſtate of Grace, a man may be a ſincere Chriſtian & not know how to manage ſuch a wish. The Apoſtle *Paul* underſtood how to abide in Chriſt, notwithſtanding of this, his extraordinarie zeal for his Countreie-men, *but the meaſure of grace is given according to the gift of Chriſt*, Eph.4.

The ſafeſt way is to take Scriptural Marks, ſuch as are ſet down, as evidences of Sanctifing Grace, for it is Dangerous to overlook theſe, ſuch as that, *John* 3.3. 'Except a man be born 'again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. *And* 2 *Cor.* '5. 17. Therefore if any man be in Chriſt he is a new Creature, 'old things are paſt away, behold all things are become 'new, *and ſuch as that John* 14. 23. If a man love me he will 'keep my words: Such as theſe are the Marks we ſhould Try our ſelves by; for the Spirit of God hath given them as Diſcoveries of Grace and our Intereſt in Chriſt, and therefore it is our ſin to neglect them; being a great Mercie that the Lord in a manner Condeſcendeth to anſwer our queſtions: How ſhall I know if heaven ſhall be my Habitation? It's anſwered, we muſt firſt be born again, we muſt be regenerated by the Spirit of God: How ſhall I know if I be in Chriſt? It's anſwered, *I muſt be a new Creature.* How ſhall I know if I have the love of God. It's anſwered, *Prov.* 8. 17. *I love them that love me*, again, how ſhall I know if I Love him? It's anſwered, I muſt keep his Words, and 1 *John* 5. 'And 'ever one that loveth him, that begat, loveth him alſo that is 'begotten of him.

6. When thou art under this Trial ſeek to have thy Witneſſes aſſiſting and ſpeaking freelie, *Rom.* 8. 16. *The Spirit it ſelf*

beareth

beareth witneſs with our Spirit that we are the Children of God; albeit Grace hath been freelie given thee, yet thou wilt need the help of the Spirit of God to make known the things that are freelie given thee, as 1 *Cor.* 2. 12. if the Giver of Grace ſhine not on Grace, it will not appear; the Spirit is the Comforter even on this account, to give the Comfort of his own Grace to make it evident, for thou canſt not Judge without evidence, 1 *Cor.* 2. 10. The Spirit ſearcheth all things, yea the Deep things of God. Thy ſecond Witneſs is thy own Spirit or Conſcience, *for the Spirit beareth witneſs with our Spirits*: Let your Conſcience ſpeak freely all it hath to ſay, as to the verie Intentions and Deſigns of thy heart, for what end, and by what Motives thou performeſt Duties; if thy Conſcience can Charge thee with Hypocriſie, let all its Depoſitions have a fair hearing, if it accuſe thee of any retained Idol of heart, or any luſt thou makeſt Proviſion for? if faithful Witneſſes be not heard, how ſhalt thou Judge of thy ſtate? or if thy Conſcience warrantably Excuſe and Comfort thee, as to thine Integrity that thou canſt humbly appeal to the Searcher of hearts, and thy very Soul content he Search thee, then thou art not to paſs from thine Integrity, *Job* 27. 5. *I will not remove my integrity from me.*

7. Search not only into your ſins, nor only into your Grace, but Search out both: ſome who are under Bondage by fear when they examine themſelves look only into their Faults, and often are apt to ſay what need for any further Search, here are ſo many ſins often prevailing, I ſee them, I feel their Power, the world alſo may ſee many of them in my Practice, though they cannot ſee all; whereupon they are forthwith diſcouraged, they open their eyes upon ſuch Words as theſe, *Pſal.* 65. 3. *Iniquities prevail againſt me*: and their faint heart, not conſidering what follows, *as for our tranſgreſſions, thou ſhalt purge them away*; nor the Intereſt they have in ſuch Comfort that the Lord will purge away their Iniquities, nor that the Grace of God hath made it their ordinarie care to *keep themſelves from their Iniquities*, *Pſal.* 18. 23. and cannot deny but ſin is their greateſt burden Pſal. 38. 4.

And

And that there is a conſtant warfare againſt it, *Rom.* 7.

Some on the other hand ſinfully covering their ſin, conſider only their beſt ſide. *Luke* 18. 11. 'Lord I thank thee that I 'am not as other men, I am more holy than many others, *Iſa.* 65. 5. But theſe are found moſt unſavoury before the Lord, as *a ſmoake in his noſe*, they pleaſe themſelves as preferable to all others, they will ſoon ſay *come ſee my zeal*, 2 Kings 10. 16. but dare not ſay as, Pſal. 139. 24. *ſee if there be any wicked way in me: If thou cover thy ſins thou ſhalt not proſper*, Prov. 28. 13. Therefore be ingenuous with God, and thy own Soul ſearch out the worſt, as well as the beſt, and the beſt as well as the worſt; the worſt that thou mayeſt be yet more humbled, and the beſt that thou mayeſt praiſe.

8. Remember alſo to ſearch into thy former ways, as well as preſent: otherways there may be unpardoned Guilt upon thee for former ſins. Pſal. 79. 8. *Remember not againſt us former ſins.* And Pſal. 25. 7. *Forgive the ſins of my youth*: Try what way thou haſt taken for the pardon of them, leſt as *Lam.* 3 42. thou find *we have tranſgreſſed, thou haſt not pardoned*: Conſider alſo what the Lord did for thee, what he wrought in thee in the days of thy youth, that though thou be not now as lively as then, yet thou muſt be excited to cry unto God as *Job* 29. 4. 'O that it were with me as in the days of my youth, 'when the Secret of God was upon my Tabernacle: and though thy declinings ſhould be bitter to thee, yet try if it did convincingly ever appear thou waſt the plainting of the Lord, *a tree of righteouſneſs bringing forth fruit unto holineſs*: for if it was ſo, though the Tree appear to be cut down, as *Job* 14. 7. 'There is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will ſprout a-'gain, *and verſ.* 9. through the ſcent of water it will bud and 'bring forth boughs like a Plaint; gather what thou canſt ſafely of this nature that thou mayeſt yet hope to ſing as in the days of thy youth, *for trees of righteouſneſs never utterly decay both root and branch.*

9. When thou has not only thy ſouls Condition and way to Examine, whether advancing or back-ſliding from the ways of God; but the very State of thy Soul whether under the do-

minion

minion of Sin or Grace, and muſt draw ſome Concluſion from the whole of thy Examinations, for thou art allowed to Judge, 1 *Cor.* 11. 31. 'For if we would Judge our ſelves, we ſhould not be Judged: Then take care that raſh Judgement proceed not, look to God that thy Sentence come from before him; it being of great moment what thou mayeſt ſafely Judge of thy ſelf, and particularly for clearing thy Right to the Lords Table, Deluſions being the Ruine of moſt men.

The *fourth* thing to be conſidered is, what we are to Try and Examine, and the things that I conceive to be the moſt neceſſary are, 1. Our knowledge. 2. Our Faith. 3. Our Love. 4. Our Repentance, and 5. Our Obedience.

As to our Knowledge. 1. It's neceſſary we have ſome meaſure of Knowledge of the Lord Himſelf. 2. His Covenant. 3. Of the Sacrament it ſelf, particularly how to Diſcern the Lords Body.

Ye are firſt to Try your Knowledge of God in Chriſt, for though it be a ſmall Portion of him we can know, yet we muſt know or periſh, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 8. Chriſt is coming to render Vengeance to them who know not God. This Knowledge of God we muſt have by Jeſus Chriſt, for the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God is in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. We cannot tranſact with him in this Ordinance if we be Ignorant of him, 1 *John* 1. 6. 'For if we ſay that we have 'fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs we lie. Therefore ſome competency of Saving Knowledge we muſt have, leſt we be found Children of Darkneſs, yet 2. In Examining this think not to find a Knowledge unto perfection, for that which is perfect is to come, 1 *Cor.* 13. 10. And when that is come, all that is in that Infinite Divine Majeſtie, can never be known by us or finite Crearures. We are apt vainly, and ſometimes Preſumptuouſly, to deſire ſuch a knowledge as is Gods peculiar Prerogative perfectly to know himſelf, and too often more curious to know what we cannot know, then what we ſhould and may know: how filencing to all fleſh ſhould be *Ex.* 3. 14. *I AM* and though all Creatures be incapable of a comprehenſiv

prehenſive knowledge of that glorious immenſe Being; yet 3. Great ſhall be our mercy to apprehend aright of him, if your conceptions of him be ſuitable to the Revelations he hath given of himſelf in his Word, content thy ſelf with theſe, leſt thou wander in thy Imaginations and loſe thy ſelf in aſpiring further. 4. Do not conclude thou knoweſt nothing of him, becauſe thou knoweſt not as thou wouldeſt, or knoweſt not as thou a Believer ſhalt hereafter. 5. Yet try if thou art ſure that though weakly, yet it is certainly the Lord himſelf, thou knoweſt this is a greater attainment and mercy then many think, to have the Soul delivered from fear of deluſion in its apprehenſions of God. Theſe words Jer. 24. 7. are of great Conſideration, 'I will give them a heart to know me that I am the Lord. Theſe People had long profeſſed the knowledge of God, and yet need to know that he is the Lord. 6 To be ſure of thy knowledge, try what Impreſſions have the Divine Attributes made on thy Soul, what effects attend thy knowledge. Pſal. 9. 10. 'They that know 'thy name will put their truſt in thee. Try alſo if thy practice can prove thy knowledge. Jer. 22. 15, 16. 'Thy father 'did judgement and juſtice, he judged the cauſe of the poor, 'then it was well with him, was not this to know me, ſaith the Lord, v. 7. In a ſpecial manner try if Chriſt hath manifeſted himſelf to thee, if thereby thou has been enabled to behold him, and in beholding transformed into the ſame image. 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. Be particular with thy conſcience, to have an account wherein that bleſſed image doth appear.

2. We muſt try what knowledge we have of the Covenant of Grace, Becauſe,

Firſt, This Ordinance of the Lords Supper is one of its ſeals; for here we have the New Teſtament in his blood, and this blood is the blood of the Covenant, Heb. 13. 20. *The blood of the everlaſting Covenant*, therefore the Seal ſhall be profaned, if there be no knowledge of that gracious Tranſaction and Covenant unto which it is a ſeal. 2. We are obliged actually to renew our Covenant with the Lord when we partake of this

this Ordinance, for we are to embrace Chriſt according to to the Terms of his Covenant; receiving of Chriſt, and joyning our ſelves to the Lord is the very ſubſtance of the Work, which cannot be performed if we be ignorant of the Covenant, for who can take hold or joyn in a Covenant whereof he is utterly ignorant? And the man who taketh not hold of the Covenant, cannot have a right to the Seal, try then paticularlie,

Firſt, If ye know the chief Articles of the Covenant, if ye know the Difference betwixt doing, as the Condition of the Covenant of Works; and believing as the Condition of the Covenant of Grace: try if you believe this great Goſpel truth in your heart, *That whoſoever believeth ſhall not perish*, John 3. 16. 2. And that the Covenant of Grace requireth perfection, though ſincerity be accepted, Matth. 5 48. 3. And that all ſincere believing hath gracious Fruits and Works attending it, *for we are created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works*, Eph. 2. 10. 4. Do ye know him who is *Surety of this better Teſtament*, Heb. 7 22. In whom all the promiſes are, yea, and amen. Do ye know that all your intereſt in this Covenant is by Jeſus Chriſt? *Who is given a Covenant for the people*, Iſaiah 42. 6.

5. Do ye know that all your Salvation and all that ye ſhould deſire is in this Covenant, 2 Sam. 23. 5. That it's *Ordered in all things for your good and ſure*, hath the Lord ſhown you his Covenant, *Pſal.* 25. 14. Do ye in heart believe it to be ſure? 6. Were ye ever taught of God how to take hold of this Covenant, and how to ſubſcribe your ſelves the Lords, Iſaiah 44. 5. *One ſhall ſay I am the Lords, and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand unto the Lord* If ye know nothing of it, ye cannot perform it, and if not performed the Seal is not yours, for ye have not Subſcribed to the Deed. Remember Chriſtian thou haſt no other Charter for thy part of Heaven but this Covenant of Grace, and if thou art a Chriſtian indeed, it will be to thee as a Fountain of joyes, *that he hath made with thee an everlaſting Covenant*, thou wilt never think thy ſelf ſafe till thou know thou art ſavinglie in it;

and

and therefore it will be the great concern of thy Soul how to Joyn thy ſelf to the Lord, eſpecially before thou partake of it's Seal: bleſſed is that hour wherein a man may ſay, now I ſubſcribed my ſelf the Lords, I have given my ſelf to him, and he hath received me graciouſly, what has thou to do from thy Birth to thy Grave, like this which can make thee ſing in the face of Death.

3. Try thy Knowledge of the Sacrament it ſelf, ſpecially if thou canſt Spiritually & Believingly Diſcern the Lords Body, for if thou Diſcerneſt no more than Bread and Wine, thou wilt Receive no more; and if thou Receiveſt no more, thou haſt not received the Sacrament of Chriſts Inſtitution, thou haſt but a ſhadow for the Subſtance; beſides the Guilt of profaning that holy Ordinance: The words of the Holy Ghoſt are carefully to be remarked. 1 *Cor.* 11. 29. 'He eateth and drinketh 'Damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lords Body. This Diſcerning of his Bodie is a diſcerning Spiritually Chriſt himſelf as Crucified; and if this one thing be wainting, the Communicant will ſurely Eat and Drink unworthilie: Therefore put ſuch Queſtions as theſe to thy ſelf: Firſt I am perſwaded that the Son of God, did take unto him our nature, and in due time did ſhed his Blood, for the remiſſion of the ſins of many? 2. That this our Bleſſed Saviour did Inſtitute this Ordinance of the Lords Supper to be Celebrated in Remembrance of him. 3. That the Bread and VVine there preſented and Bleſſed, doth Repreſent his Bodie and Blood. 4. That CHRIST who Offered himſelf to his Father, doth in this Ordinance Offer himſelf to be Received by Believers. 5. That in Offering himſelf to be Received by them, he Offereth unto them alſo the Benefits purchaſed by his Death. 6. That every partaker muſt ſo Diſcern him by Faith. 7. And every partaker is Obliged by Faith to Receive himſelf with all his Benefits, when he Receiveth that Bread, which Chriſt Requireth to take and eat, and that no Perſon ſhould Preſume to eat of that Bread or drink of that Cup, but with a full purpoſe of

of heart thankfully to receive himself? seek to be established in these before thou go to the Lords Table, that thou mayest partake in faith, and not by eating and doubting, or eating and ignorant what thou art about, many Souls are Guilty before God, for taking so little pains to prevent their being Guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and some not of the very worst, obstruct their own Comfort by indistinct Communicating: there being no action under the Heavens that requireth more fixed, ripe, and distinct apprehensions, than partaking at the Lords Table.

Secondly, Our Faith must be examined before we go to the Lords Table. Consider first the Reasons why this must be done. And 2. How to find out saving Faith. The Reasons. 1. Christ himself is to be received at his Table, and this Receiving of him is Believing, as is plain by *John* 1. 12: 'But as manie as received him, to them gave he power to 'become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on 'his name. Therefore Christ cannot be received without Faith, and if he be not Received, the Sacrament is profaned: 2*ly*, The Communicant should be a Believing Believer, having Faith not onlie in habit, but in *Act*.

3. Our Faith must be Examined, because we are Warned that there are manie sorts of Faith, and yet but one kind of faith is saving whereby the man is justified: We read of a Believing which Devils have, *James* 2. 19. Some wicked men also are said to believe, yet remaining in the bond of Iniquitie, *Acts* 8. 13. We have an account also that some Believed for a while *Luke* 8. 13. It's Lamentable that men stand not in awe of such Scriptures, and so few moved with fear, lest their Faith be no better, we Read also of some mens Faith raised so high as thereby to work Miracles and yet their last Sentence *Depart from me*, *Matth.* 7. 21. 22. It appears these men did mistake true Saving Faith, thinking such as they had, would carry them to Heaven; for they make it a plea for their Admissions, *did we not cast out Devils in thy Name*; doubtless this made them Christians of great fame in the World: but how easie is it even for men of great

great gifts to miſtake Faith, and go to Death without a Diſcovery of that Miſtery. We are warned alſo of a dead faith, *James* 2. 17. Such a faith as found men, and leaveth them dead in their ſins. It cannot therefore be ſafe after ſuch warnings, for any man to conclude, that becauſe in the general he believeth, therefore he ſhall be ſaved, and hath a right to the Lords Supper, except the nature of his faith be inſtructed and made out to be ſuch as thereby he is united to Chriſt, and ſo ſhall be juſtified.

4. This Danger of miſtaking faith being ſo great, it's our Mercie that there is a particular Command to examine our Faith as we would be ſecured, we are not Reprobates, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. So that if this be ſtill neglected, we not only endanger our Souls by Deluſion, but ſhall be found ſinfully diſobedient to a merciful Command.

5. That which is ſaid Heb. 11.6. *That without faith it's impoſſible to pleaſe God*, ſhould of its ſelf engage us to Examine our Faith; what regard can we have to God, and be contentedly in that ſtate, wherein it's impoſſible to pleaſe him, or be ignorant whether in that ſtate or not? Can ye look up to God and think it not worth the while to enquire whether ye be pleaſing or diſpleaſing to him? Dare ye ſit down at his Table not knowing, but it may be ſaid of you in particular, it's impoſſible for this man to be pleaſing to me? and no wonder he cannot be accepted as not being in Chriſt, there's no acceptation but in the Beloved, *Epheſ.* 1.6.

Theſe few Reaſons without adding mo, may convince, that it highlie concerneth thee to be at the utmoſt pains in trying of thy faith; Conſider alſo that all thy pains ſhall be richlie payed home, if by ſearching thou ſhalt find that God hath beſtowed upon thee precious faith, 2 Pet. 1. 1. *The Faith of Gods Elect*, Tit. 1 1. That faith whereby a ſinner is *juſtified and hath peace with God*, Rom. 5. 1. That faith whereby thou art Sanctified, *Act* 26. 18. That Faith the end whereof ſhall be the Salvation of thy Soul, 1 Peter 1. 9. *Receiving the end of your Faith even the ſalvation of your ſouls.*

What

What pains should be valued where this is the Result. How great may be thy Joy in his Salvation, when thou canst say, *The Beloved is mine, and I am his*, Cant. 2. 16. Christ is mine, the Pledges of his Love are mine, his Fellowship is mine, his Food and Table is mine, *He hath clothed me with the Garments of Salvation*, Isaiah 61. 10. I shall not be rejected for want of a Wedding Garment, *Shall he not with Christ freely give us all things*, Romans 8,32.

Q. But what way shall I take to examine my Faith? First, try if you can observe the direct Actings of faith, that you may say now Lord I believe, though before it be well out of your lips, ye must add Lord help my Unbelief, *Mark* 9. 24. Acceptable believing is of so great importance, that serious Souls are solicitous so to believe, as that they might immediately reflect upon it, and finding it believing indeed; blessed Jesus Christ would needs have it out of his Disciples own mouths that they did believe, *John* 16. 30. *By this we believe*, They do not say we have believed, but in the very present time we believe. And in the next verse, Christ saith, *Do ye now believe*, for this Cause it were good especially for you who doubt of your faith, to set your selves for actual Present Believing before ye go to the Lords Table; some People are apt to wearie of long Debates in their mind, whether they have Believed or not; and Tempted to give it over; whereby the Blessing of God upon this mean are Relieved of their Fears, and cleared of their Doubts, Addressing themselves to the Lord with all Reverence and Seriousness they can attain, and in the sense of their sin and need of a Saviour, set themselves to receive and embrace Christ as their Redeemer and Lord. This Mean hath been so Countenanced of God, that after its serious Performance, some hath gone to the Lords Table with Desire, Chearfulness, and Peace though doubting before.

Object. But I cannot believe when I please, nor is it so light a matter to go off hand and believe, and so have done.

Answ. 1. Ye cannot believe too soon; if you believe indeed. 2. This is an Opportune Season for it, when ye

are

are called to partake of an Ordinance which you cannot neglect without ſin, nor partake without believing.

3. Ye are peremptorlie commanded to Believe, therefore it's Duty to endeavour it; and it's ſuch a Dutie as ſhould not be Deferred: that ye are commanded conſider, *John* 14. 1. 1 *John* 3. 23. 'And this is his Commandment that we ſhould believe on the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt. And that it's a Dutie not not to be Delayed, ſee John 3. 36. 'He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him. If you ſtill reply, I cannot Believe though it be a Duty: *I* will anſwer that no more can you perform any Religious Duty aright, will ye therefore reſolve to perform no Religious Duty? will ye nor Pray, becauſe ye cannot pray aright? will ye never praiſe, becauſe ye cannot do it aright? ſee what thy very Reaſon can anſwer to this plain Argument; what ever God commandeth we are obliged to endeavour Obedience unto it, but God commandeth us to Believe, therefore we are obliged to endeavour Obedience to this Command of Believing. And though it be granted that we cannot Believe when we will, yet we are to endeavour, and put out the withered Hand, hoping we may take it in whole: if the Lord ſhall ſay 'ariſe from the dead, as *Eph.* 5. 14. Should we Diſpute and proudly Quarrel inſtead of obeying? cannot the Lord of Life give Life with the Word of Command as to dead *Lazarus*, mind *John* 11. 25. 'He that believeth in me, 'tho he were dead yet ſhall he live. But if ye cannot find the Truth of your Faith by this manner of Trial; yet ye are not ſo to leave it, for what quiet can a man have in his Soul, not knowing but he is ſtill under the wrath of God? as all Unbelievers are, and not knowing what hour that wrath may ſurpriſe him, with its intollerable weight and Eternity. Therefore other means muſt be eſſayed to ſearch it out by its Fruits, for *Luke* 6 44. 'A tree is known by his Fruits, and the Apoſtle *James* ſaith 'He will ſhew his faith by his Works: it's a great mercy that there is any way to have it ſecured.

Conſider theſe two wayes, wherein by the bleſsing of God, the

the ſincerity of your Faith may be diſcovered, as firſt, by trying your ordinary Dependance on God, and 2. By ſearching into the Gracious Fruits of Faith, ſpecially that by faith the heart is purified, *Acts* 15 9.

For the firſt, enquire at your own Conſcience, what courſe is ordinarly taken for Light and Direction, when ye are in Darkneſs or Doubts; do ye ſtill lean to your own Underſtanding, or on Chriſt as made of God Wiſdom unto Believers, 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. 2. When ye do pray for wiſdom and light, is it that you may walk according to that Light or Direction? Deal ye ingenuouſly with God? Not ſeeking Counſel of God, with a Reſerve, if it be to your own Humor, but Reſolved to walk in his Light whitherſoever it lead you, has thy Soul fixed on the Lord as thy Guide, then Remember what is ſaid; *Pſal.* 73. 24. *Thou ſhalt guide me with thy Counſel, and afterward receive me to Glory*, for Glory will follow, to the Followers of this Guide.

2. Try alſo what way thou taketh for thy Guilt: whither doſt thou go for eaſe to thy Conſcience when it accuſeth thee? (as it certainly will if not ſear'd) is it to the Blood of Chriſt? Or doſt thou make a cover to thy Sin of thy Duties, thy Tears, thy Mourning, thy Amending of ſome evil Practices, and thy not being as ſome other men? If this be thy Way, thou art yet a Stranger to Goſpel-faith: But if thou believeſt in thine heart, that the Blood of Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin, and thou wilt not diſhonour that perfect Sacrifice, by thinking it inſufficient for thy ſin, and therefore leans thy Soul with all its Guilt upon him, *Who made his Soul an offering for Sin*, Iſa. 53. 10. Thy Care is to be found in him not having thine own Righteouſneſs; but that which is by the Faith of the Son of God, thou muſt have a Jeſus to ſave thee from thy Sins, thou muſt flee to him as thy Refuge, then conſider what is ſaid, Heb. 6 18. *That we might have a ſtrong Conſolation, who have fled for a refuge*: Our merciful Redeemer ſaith

not to the poor ſinner, thou hadſt never come to me, but becauſe thou could make no other ſhift, thou has made me thy laſt choice; therefore be gone. No, no, but when the poor ſinner cometh only by a Conſent of neceſſity, yet he will in no ways caſt him out, though he could find no other Refuge, yet when he cometh, he ſhall have ſtrong Conſolation; thou findeſt Bleſſed Jeſus like none but himſelf, this is not the manner of men.

3. Search thy way, as to the ſubduing of thy ſin: if thou ſuffereſt ſin peaceably to prevail as its willing ſervant, or is its prevailing bitter, making thee often complain to God againſt thy ſelf, as *Pſal.* 65. 3. Art thou not often crying to him, that no ſin may have dominion over thee? That he would cleanſe thee from ſecret faults, and keep thee back from ſinning, *Pſal.* 19. 12, 13. Art thou not ſearching alſo upon what ground thou may'eſt expect the mortifying of any ſin; For if thou art ſincere with God, and pained with ſin, thou will be as earneſt to know upon what grounds thou may expect the ſubduing of ſin, as the pardon of it. Therefore it will not ſuffice thee to have it to ſay, thou has prayed for a clean heart, but to know what encouragement God hath given to hope for it, this will make thee ſearch the promiſes for cleanſing and ſanctifying of thy Soul, and what intereſt thou haſt in theſe promiſes, this will make thee careful for an Intereſt in Chriſt crucified, that by him thy luſts may be crucified, and that thou ſerve ſin no more, as *Rom.* 6. 6. And though it be one of the greateſt tryals of thy faith, to believe the mortification of ſome rooted ſins that eaſilie beſet thee, yet dare thou not diſtruſt the promiſe of God, *Ezek.* 36. 25. *From all your filthineſs, and from all your Idols will I cleanſe you*: Though thou haſt been ſtriving many years againſt ſome particular ſins, without the deſired ſucceſs, yet thy regard to the promiſe continueth, thou dependeſt ſtill upon it, as *Micah* 7. 19. *He will ſubdue our Iniquities*: This is the faith of the Saints, who now inherit the Promiſes.

4. When

4. When thou has duties to perform far above thy ſtrength: try what is then thy Wayes? Doſt thou neglect them, becauſe they are difficult, or doſt thou go to thy work in the ſtrength of the Lord God? If thou goeſt to work in his ſtrength, then thou art acting faith: Art thou not ſtrongeſt, when weakeſt in thy own opinion; and upon this Experience, that out of weakneſs thou art made ſtrong, and that God never faileth thee, thou reſolveſt to refuſe no dutie he requireth of thee? for thy *Ebenezer* is ſet up hitherto hath God helped: this is direct living by faith; and if Believers were more exact in remarking, how often God doth countenance their eſſays to believe, when they are weakeſt in their own eyes the comfort of their faith would not be ſo rare; how gratefully is it to be remembered, that when there is ſharp ſenſe of guilt, and fear of being deſerted, becauſe of guilt, yet engaging in work that God calleth unto, ſome can hardly inſtance a time when they lean to promiſed ſtrength, but God appeareth the glory of their ſtrength: Whoſo obſerveth theſe things, are in the way to underſtand the loving kindneſs of the Lord, and ſo obtain the comfort of their Faith.

5. If thou canſt not yet take comfort to thy ſelf, that this precious faith is thine: ſearch yet further, for it's worth the pains of many days or years, if it be found at laſt: Try then if thou canſt find it in the furnace of affliction, where ſometimes it ſhineth more brightly, than in any eaſie lot.

In the day of thy Calamity whether goeſt thou for help, to the arm of fleſh, or to the arm of *Jehovah*? where goeſt thou firſt, doſt thou no ſooner come to trouble, but thou lookeſt up to meet with God as ſoon as the trouble? There is much to be diſcovered of the dependance of a Soul by the way it firſt taketh in affliction; for what is habitually truſted, is commonly firſt reſorted unto; when godly *Job* heareth the ſurpriſing tidings of the death of his dear Children, and other loſſes; immediatly he looketh to God and worſhippeth,

Job 1. 20. So when *David* was diſtreſſed by the *Amalakites*, taking his Relations, and all away Captives, 1 *Samuel* 30. 1. The firſt thing he doth, is to encourage himſelf in the Lord, verſe 6. But the firſt thing we hear the poor men ſpeaking, who were not ſo acquainted with dependance on God, was the Stoning of *David*. Next, when thy trials are overwhelming, ſo that thou art ready to ſink; Try if thou believeſt that there is a Rock able to bear thee, & the heavieſt of thy Burdens; and that God hath not left his people ſo deſtitute, as that periſhing muſt needs be the Reſult of theſe overwhelmings: but as it is *Pſal.* 61. 2. *When my heart is overwhelmed lead me to the Rock that is higher then I*: So thou betakeſt thy ſelf to God, as thy Rock; and withal commits the leading of thy ſoul unto this Rock, to him who is thy Rock, here is abounding Faith, not only truſting the Lord as the Rock of Ages, but the leading of thy Soul to himſelf, thou commits the very management of thy ſoul into his hands, if thou canſt claim this as thy VVay, then thou haſt the precious Faith thou art ſeeking after.

Try alſo the unfeignedneſs of thy faith, by other unfeigned fruits: If thou haſt true faith toward God, it will carry up thy heart to him; thou will live upon Chriſt, and obtain ſome real Victory over this World, it ſhall not captivate thy Soul, as it doth the ſouls of men who have their portion in this life, 1 *John* 5 4. It will raiſe thee to the affectionat Meditations of thy better Countrey, and there thy deſires will be captivated, untill thy ſelf be placed with them, *Heb.* 11. 16. Thou will find the firſt fruits ſo pleaſant, as to deaden thy heart to the pleaſures of ſin: For Faith will purifie thy heart, *Acts* 15 9. And though this evidence of Faith appeareth difficult, becauſe of the many impurities of heart remaining in Believers: yet the words of God muſt be regarded, and this purifying of the heart, muſt, and will be found, where juſtifying precious Faith is; for Believers even in this Life obtain ſome meaſure of true purity, as appeareth by *Matth.* 5. 8. *Bleſſed are the pure*

pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God. For here Chriſt declareth ſome are pure in heart, before they come to ſee God, as they ſhall ſee him hereafter, ſo, *John* 15. 3. *Now are ye clean or pure,* as the word is commonlie rendered; Believers being in a juſtified State, they obtain in this life ſome real puritie of heart, notwithſtanding of their Imperfections; and it becometh a ſnare, or woe to Souls that ſtudy no puritie, becauſe of no intire perfection in this life, and theſe have the true beginnings of holie puritie, who follow that Example and direction, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the ſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God;* for,

1. Chriſt died, *to purifie a people unto himſelf, zealous of good works,* Tit. 2. 14. And he will ſee the travel of his Soul.

2. Chriſt dwelleth in the heart by Faith, and where he dwelleth, there the throne of iniquitie cannot ſtand, *Pſalm* 94 20.

3. *All who receive forgiveneſs of ſins, are ſanctified by faith in Chriſt.* Acts 26. 18.

3. *Sin ſhall not have dominion over any, who are brought truly under Grace,* Rom. 6. 14.

Search diligentlie for this purifying of the heart, as thou wouldeſt not be deceived of thy Faith and Hope, for according to 1 *John* 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure:* think not of excepting thy ſelf where the words of God are, everie man examine your ſelves, Particularlie in theſe 4 things;

Firſt, If thou findeſt an active Principle in thy Soul ſtanding in oppoſition to ſin; if ſin be hated, ſo as thou can ſay of it, it's the evil I hate, *Rom.* 7 15. See that this hatred be not pretended, and ſin in the mean time cheriſhed; for it's not onlie a ſure ſtep toward, but alſo a great length in the puritie of holineſs, to be a hater of ſin.

2. And to ſecure the truth of this hatred, try if there be an ordinarie Warfare againſt ſin: for if it be hated, there will be oppoſition made to it, as *Romans* 7. 23. Thy ſins will feel thy Grace to have ſome power; And therefore

Christ compareth the mortifying of sin to the cutting off the right hand, &c. And where there is nothing of this, it's vain to pretend hatred.

3. Try if thou loveſt the Law, which requireth this purity: For to love that very Law which reſtraineth from Sin, yea, the ſins that eaſilie beſet us; is a bleſſed, but I fear a rare attainment, to be content to be hedged up from the way of our own hearts; And to love the Hedge of Gods making, not to wiſh in heart, that the Laws of God were otherwiſe, that we might have a greater Liberty for ſin, *Pſalms* 119. 97. *O how love I thy Law.* There is the greater neceſsitie of ſearching into this, becauſe it's given us as the Character of a godly man, to delight in the law of the Lord, *Pſalms* 1. 2.

4. Try what ſucceſs attendeth your endeavours againſt ſin: if by dependance on the ſpirit of Chriſt, which mortifieth the deeds of the Body, it may be ſaid of you, as 1 *Peter* 1. 22. *Seeing ye have purified your ſouls in obeying the* Truth. Mark thele word ye have purified: whereby we may ſee that Believers have ſome ſucceſs againſt their ſin, their work is to cleanſe themſelves, and their labor is not in vain in the Lord: and it's neceſſarie, that everie Chriſtian have ſome inſtances, and proofs of this in readineſs, that he hath purified his ſoul, and kept himſelf from his iniquity: and ſhut not your eyes upon that awful evidence of an Intereſt in Chriſt, *Gal.* 5. 24. *They that are Chriſts have crucified the fleſh, with the affections and luſts.* Know then, that it not onlie ſhould be, but is a ſound Believers work to be purifying his Soul, though he get not ſin aboliſhed in this life.

3. Communicants ſhould alſo examine their love to Chriſt before they go to the Lords Table: And if any ſhall ſay that this is a ſuperfluous burdening of people with unneceſſary queſtions, their Faith being clear, what needeth examining of Love alſo? But I find Chriſt is of another mind, who examineth his followers, both as to their faith, and love, *John* 16. 31. *Do ye now believe?* And *John* 21. 16. *Loveſt thou*

me.

me. Therefore we are concerned to be in a readineſs to anſwer both, and if our love cannot abide the trial, no more can our faith, *for faith worketh by love, Gal.* 5.6. Conſider firſt, that Chriſt manifeſteth himſelf to ſuch as love him, *John* 14. 23. And if Chriſt do not manifeſt himſelf to us at his Table, we ſhall never be able to diſcern him aright. *A* manifeſted Chriſt is the bleſsing and beautie of that work, even when he manifeſteth himſelf, as crucified, bleeding to death; he is then moſt lovelie and beautiful to the Believer, he then sheweth himſelf dying in pure love; and what manifeſtation of him should be more engaging, and overcoming; but no eyes can thus profitablie behold him, except he manifeſt and shew himſelf, which the Lovers of Chriſt may expect, and therefore our love to him should be examined.

2. This holy Communion is a banquet of love; and therein it might well be ſaid he giveth his loves, giving himſelf and the pledges of his love, *Cant.* 7.12. And is appointed onlie for the lovers of Chriſt, they are his friends and beloved, who are allowed to eat and drink abundantlie, *Cant.* 5.1. The lovers of Chriſt are the onlie prepared perſons for Communion with him, *for he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God,* 1 *Joh.* 4. 16. And no man is capable of Communion with him who wants it; love being neceſsarie to true fellowship: There's need then to ſearch for it, leſt Chriſt have it to ſay, as *Joh.* 5 42. *I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.*

3. This Grace should be careſullie ſearched for: Becauſe we are readie to flatter and deceive our ſelves with an Hypocritical love, *Ezekiel* 33. 31. *With their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetouſneſs.* They make a show of what they have not, men are not willing to charge themſelves with the want of love to God, it appears ſo hainous, and therefore muſt have its shadow, but their heart is reſerved for others, and far from God, *Iſaiah* 29.13. *They have removed their heart far from me.* Yet the poor men were honouring God with their lips.

4. Bleſſed

4. Blessed Jesus Christ not onlie declareth, that love is the great Command, *Matth.* 22. 37. But also searcheth most narrowlie and presinglie, for this Grace in his People, as appears by questioning *Peter* 3 times if he loved him, untill the godlie man was grieved, fearing his love was suspected; This wounded him, that he was asked the third time, *John* 21. 17. Christ questions should teach us to question our selves, and to be in readiness for such an answer, as was then given, *Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee*; He could give an acount of his love, and appeal to the searcher of hearts for its sincerity, and so should we.

5. It distresseth serious souls to be in doubt of their love, being of the same mind with the *Apostle*, 1 Cor. 13 12. *If I have not charity or love, I am nothing.* And verse 3. *Though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth nothing.* Some of the People of God know well, that they take pains in religious Duties, but have no comfort in them, fearing their Diligence floweth not from a Principle of love, it would be great joy to them if they were assured, that ever they performed any dutie by a constraint of the love of Christ; and is worth the labour of many years, when our searching cometh at length to this issue; *Lord, thou knowest I love thee*: and no wonder it be most sweet to the soul to know the truth of its love, for thereby it may warrantably read and conclude it self beloved of God, 1 *John* 4. 19. *We love him, because he first loved us.* Prov. 6. 17. *I love them that love me,* and John 16. 27. *The father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me*: This being discovered, the Believer may go to God as his exceeding joy, *Psalms* 43. 4. What riches or honor like this, to be actually interested in the love of God? With what pleasure and confidence may such a man go to the Lords Table, knowing that the Master of the Feast loveth him.

And for your help to discover, whether ye love the Lord Jesus in sincerity or not, take notice of these few things.

First, Christ himself condescendeth to give us help how to resolve

ſolve this queſtion in propoſing to us a ſure evidence of love, John 14. 23. *If a man love me, he will keep my words.* And though this mark appear difficult, becauſe of our many failings in keeping of his words; yet it will be dangerous to overlook it, and may prove a contempt of the mercy that is in ſuch a diſcovery, and a neglect of ſo gracious a bond to obedience, that as we would teſtifie our love to Chriſt, we muſt keep his words.

2. Hereby Chriſt alſo ſheweth that a ſtudy of Obedience, and pleaſing him will natively flow from love, if we love, we cannot but endeavour to pleaſe the Party beloved, his commands will not be grievious, 1 John 5. 3. 'This is the love of 'God, that we keep his Commandments and his Commands 'are not grievious. Love maketh his yoak eaſie, and pleaſing him their delight, 1 John 3. 22. We keep his Commandments, and do thoſe things that are pleaſing in his ſight. Try if your way be formed for his eye, and your greateſt care be to pleaſe him, whoever elſe be diſpleaſed.

3. And when this is become your habitual affectionate care to pleaſe him, though there be failings; yet Chriſt can diſcern the ſincerity of your love, and ſay, *you have loved me*, John. 16. 27. He can diſcern a willing ſpirit, when the fleſh is weak; though Chriſt had his Diſciples often to reprove, yet knowing he had their hearts, and that their ordinary care was to obey him: He as their good advocat, declareth to his Father that they had kept his Word, John 17. 6. *And they have kept thy word.*

Secondly If ye be lovers of Chriſt, ye will deſire his fellowſhip, *I ſought him whom my Soul loveth*, Cant. 3. 1. Their prayers are not only to quiet their conſcience, that they have not neglected their Duty, but they long to be near to him, and muſt ſeek untill they find, it was himſelf they ſought, and nothing elſe can ſupply his room.

Thirdly, True love to Chriſt is earneſt for his Love, and cannot be quieted without it: there is a wonderful boldneſs in this Grace, they aſpire to no leſs than to know that Chriſt's

Christs desire is toward them, *Cant.* 7. 10. Then they know they are safe, then they know he will not be long from them, the desire of their soul being toward him, *Isa.* 26. 8. And his desire toward them, his favour and love is better than life to them: And therefore they cry as, *Psal.* 106. 4. *Remember me O Lord with the favour that thou bearest to thy People*: It is the love that thou hast to thy chosen that is my happiness, whatever other mercies I get, yet they will all leave me miserable if I have not that favour, which is peculiar to thy chosen, Lord give me that favour which will at length make me glory with thine inheritance, Lord do to me, *as thou usest to do to those who love thy Name*, *Psal.* 119. 132. Try what earnestness and wrestlings you ever had for his love, or if common mercies, or Common Gifts of the Spirit, be all which you seek after.

Fourthly, If thou be a Sincere lover of Christ, thou wilt love his honour, yea, the very place where his honour dwelleth, *Psal.* 26. 8. Thou wilt desire his praise may be glorious, *Psa.* 66. 2, 'Sing forth the honour of his Name, make his 'praise glorious. As thou art able, thou wilt set forth the beauty of Christ to engage others, to love and praise him, *Cant.* 5. 10. And if thou lovest him and his glory, thou wilt be active in glorifying him thy self, *Ps.* 86. 12. 'I will praise thee O Lord 'my God with all my heart, and I will glorifie thy Name 'for evermore. Put such questions as these to thy own soul. Is it on my heart how to glorifie him? Do I cry to God in secret for help to glorifie him? Is it my rejoycing, when he giveth help to do it? Have I fear, that vain glory be more studied, than his glory? Am I as much grieved for dishonour to him, as dishonour to my wretched self? Hath the grace of GOD so far prevailed, that no applause of Men is satisfying, except I have some Testimony in my Conscience, that I really designed the Glory of God: That blessed Word of Christs, should humble us, and make us ashamed of that predominate sin of pride in the World, *John* 8. 50. *I seek not mine own glory*: How great is the

the mercy to bear that part of his Image, and the victorie ſweet, when it can be ſaid, *Nor of men ſought we glory,* 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 6. The want of this love to Gods glory, and indulged love to vain glory, makes many a poor man loſe all his labours in Religion, and there's no remedy without uprightneſs of love to God.

Fifthly, *Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him alſo that is begotten of him,* 1 *John* 5. 1. If thou loveſt Chriſt, thou will love his Image, and where his renewed Image ſhineth moſt, there thou will love moſt: This is ſo much regarded, that it's improved for the certainty of mens being paſſed from death to Life, *becauſe they love the brethren,* 1 *John* 3. 14. Try then who are the excellent in the earth in thy account, try if thou loveſt godly perſons though mean in the World, or if thou art ſuch as can value no man for his Godlineſs, except he be rich in the World; Try if thou canſt love a godly man, though he have no great opinion of thee, it may be thou deſerveſt no great opinion, and ſhould not love him the worſe for that: Try thy ſelf the more exactly in this point of thy love to the People of God, becauſe God is greatly diſhonoured in this age for the want of it. Beware of patcht up counterfeit agreements, and love before Communions. But as thou art to labour for Communion with Chriſt himſelf, ſo labour to the utmoſt of thy power, for a cordial Communion of Saints, that you may Feaſt together here in love and hope, to be together in a better place, and be not ſaying, I forgive ſuch a Chriſtian, but I deſire never to ſee him, I deſire never to ſpeak with him: this will not be found forgiving from the heart as Chriſt requireth, *Matth.* 18. 35. *Let your love be without diſſimulation, Rom.* 12. 9. Not in Word only, but in Deed, promoting the good name of one another, *See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently,* 1 *Pet.* 1. 22. Theſe are the Words of God, but Ah how little regarded, and I fear ſhall not be much regarded, while we continue falling from our firſt love to Chriſt, love to him, and his followers muſt revive together.

4. *We*

4. *We ſhould alſo examine our Repentance*, becauſe;

Firſt, Chriſt hath enjoyned it with a certification, that except we repent, we ſhall periſh, *Luke* 13.3. How ſpeechleſs will it render the Impenitent periſhing ſinner, when the Books are opened, and this found, that this obdured ſinner was forwarned of this periſhing, but ſhut his ears, and would not hearken.

2. This Repentance is that part of Religion, which we are moſt averſe either to act, or try; and therefore the greater need to oblige our ſelves to ſearch if we have it: For to hear of Faith, and love, and love goeth more eaſily down, the very naming of them is ſweet to ſuch as know little of them; but cannot with patience hear of conviction, mourning, or departing from iniquity; many alſo continue to enſnare their own ſouls with the conceit that they believe ſo well, that they need not trouble themſelves with Repentance; but they ſhould remark Chriſts requiring of both, *Mark*, 1. 15. Repent and believe.

3. Others obſerving Repentance to be peremptorly Commanded, Conclude that ſome Repentance they muſt have, but are ſatisfied with a ſhadow of it, and are ſo ſuperficial, that any extorted flash of ſorrowing, any change, any returning, though not to the moſt High ſatisfieth them. We find, *Hoſ.* 7. 16. That ſome return, but not to the moſt High. They think they have returned ſufficiently, And therefore need no more ſaying as *Mal.* 3.7. *Wherein ſhal we return?* The Lord ſeeth that they are yet to turn to him, as in the ſame *ver. return unto me*, ſaith the Lord, but they think otherwiſe, this ſhould make us afraid, leſt God do not judge of our Repentance as we do, and therefore to examine it in time; It's eaſie for people to think themſelves ſufficiently qualified for a Communion, or for Heaven it ſelf, but the woe will be that it was only themſelves thought ſo, when they find God their Judge of another mind.

4. There is the more need to examine our Repentance in this age, wherein the broken in ſpirit, and contrite in heart, are

are as ſigns and wonders; as if all the broken in heart before us had been in an error, and troubled themſelves in vain, or as if God never regarded any ſuch Soul-exercile, and wounding of Spirit, though he hath expreſly declared, *Iſa.* 66. 2. 'But to this man will I look even to him that is poor, and of 'a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word. Then it's neceſſary as men would have God to look favourably upon them, as ye would have a comfortable reviving, look at his Table, to try if ever you were wounded in heart for your ſin: See to it leſt the ſearcher of hearts have it to ſay, here is a man, that to this day was never humbled, *Jer.* 44. 10. Never pierced at the heart, never at what ſhall I do to be ſaved, never ſo wounded, but he could eaſiely cure himſelf, no uſe for that mercie, *Pſal.* 147. 3: *He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.* You will needs go to the Communion, but it's not for any great buſineſs you have to do there, you have no burden of ſin to take off; as finding it too heavy for your ſelves, *Pſal.* 38. 4.

5. There is the greater need to ſearch particularly into the ſincerity of our Repentance, before we approach the Lords Table; becauſe ſome ſerious Chriſtians may deprive themſelves of that benefit, fearing their Repentance is not ſound, and that becauſe they had never ſuch a meaſure of grief as others, never ſo deeplie wounded for ſin as they think they ſhould, or as they have perceived by others who refuſed to be comforted, were long in bondage of fear, and ready to be ſwallowed up with grief and terrour.

To clear this a little, Conſider, firſt, that trouble or terrour of mind of it ſelf, cannot prove any gracious good in a ſoul: A *Judas* hath terror of mind, but no grace, terrour is ſometimes a Judgement from God, as *Lev.* 26. 16. *I will appoint over you terrour*, and *Deut.* 28. 20. *The Lord ſhall ſend upon thee vexation*, and ſome wicked perſons are confounded with terrours, *Pſal.* 73. 19. Therefore it's not ſafe to deſire ſuch terrour of mind as ſome have been under; for it was their plague.

2. Men

2. Men may have a temporary ſorrowing and grief, which ſin hath occaſioned, and yet their ſorrowing is not for their ſin, nor any ſanctifying grace in their mourning. A *Saul* may lift up his voice and weep, and confeſs others more righteous than himſelf, and yet ſtill go on in his ſin, 1 *Sam.* 24. 16, 17. Some may make a great noiſe of their Repentance, as *he lift up his voice and wept.* And yet but a worldly ſorrow that *David* was like to have the Kingdom is his greateſt grief.

3 Some are ſurpriſed with a ſudden fear of Wrath, which they cannot ſhake off; but are as captives, ſo far from any true and humbling ſenſe of ſin; that all their trouble is for being troubled, and cannot help it. They are in chains and fetters not knowing for what, for it ſeiſed them without any apprehenſion, or ſenſe of their ſin: This doth ſometimes make a great alteration and commotion while it continueth, ſo that they tremble under it, as *Felix*, *Acts* 24 25. The poor man knew not what was come on him, he is frighted but getteth no good of it, and therefore deſires *Paul* to be gone: I have ſeen ſeverals after the ſame manner frighted with a ſudden fear of Judgement, and for any thing appeared, their Religion never went a greater length; yet their trouble in the time was great, and made a great noiſe, but when the fright was over, their religion was alſo over. It is not ſafe then to ſet up ſuch as paterns for your Repentance, though the degree of their anguiſh might be greater than yours.

4. Though the Law be our School-maſter to bring us unto Chriſt, *Gal.* 3.24. Whereby we muſt have the knowledge of our ſin, be convinced, be humbled; Yet we ſhall not find that every one who cometh to Chriſt is, or muſt be a like meaſure humbled, all are not in a like depth, before their heads be brought above Water, all have not the pangs of the new Birth alike painful, all are not ſtruck down to the ground, and made blind before they be comforted, as *Paul*, We find not the degree of any mans grief for ſin,

ſet

ſet up as a Standard, whereby all others muſt be meaſured; but we find the difference between a worldly, and a godly ſorrowing much regarded, 2 *Cor.* 7. 10. 'For godly ſorrow 'worketh Repentance to ſalvation, not to be repented of, but 'the ſorrow of the world worketh death. Therefore we ſhal be wiſer to ſearch out the nature of our grief; than its degrees only, If it be a godly ſorrowing on the account of ſin, and its ſinfulneſs, in provoking a holy & gracious God, This we find made a ground of Comfort to the people of God, *ver.* 11. That they ſorrowed after a godly ſort, and reformation attended their ſorrow.

5. It's neceſſarie alſo, that we take care leſt our preſſing for ſuch a meaſure of grief, be not by the ſecret deceitfulneſs of our hearts, deſigned as a Sacrifice for our ſin, Idolizing it too much, as if thereby ſin might be expiated.

6. It would be alſo conſidered, that poor frail men may be ſwallowed up with overmuch ſorrow; ſo that ſome perſons ſeek after they know not what, even ſuch a meaſure of ſorrow as might be their own ruine, 2 *Cor.* 2 7. You ought rather to comfort ſuch a man, *leſt perhaps he be ſwallowed up with overmuch ſorrow.*

7. Where ſorrowing for ſin is truely godly ſorrowing; yet one Chriſtian may have a higher degree, than another who is alſo ſincere; a man may have true Faith, true Love, true Repentance; and yet another exceed him in all theſe: for both the grace, and its meaſure are the gift of Chriſt, *Eph.* 4. 7. *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt.*

8. Yet becauſe the moſt common danger is a defect in this godly ſorrowing, and no ſincere humbling found, with many profeſſed Chriſtians, no ſuch grief or hatred of ſin, as can bear the name of ſound Repentance, and effectual turning to God: Therefore as it is a moſt neceſſary grace, we ſhould ſeek to grow in it, as we would have God to lift us up, we muſt be humbled, *Jam.* 4. 10. *And bleſſed are they that mourn,*

mourn, for they shall be comforted, And that you may be in some measure helped to discern the soundness of your Repentance, Search thy own soul for these things.

First, If thou grievest for the first motions of sin in thy heart, and resists them; though they go no further than thy thoughts and imaginations, and though not intertained by thy affections; *For the thought of foolishness is sin Prov.* 24. 9. But thou findest a hateing of vain thoughts, *Psal.* 119. 113. This was a comfort to the man of God, and so it may be to thee.

2. Do you not find a sincere loathing of your selves, so that hardly can any man Judge thee worse, than thou judgest thy self, and this thou feelest without dissimulation; By this ingenuous judging of your self you may take comfort for what is said, 1 *Cor.* 11. 31. *For* if we would judge our selves, we should not be Judged, ye shall not be judged into condemnation, godlie *Job* lookt upon this abhorring of himself, as sound Repentance, *Job* 42. 6. *For* he really judged himself vile, *Job* 40. 4

3. Dost thou not search out thy sins purposelie that thou may'st mourn over them, and turn from them? This makes it appear, that sin is hated in the Soul, when thou dost search for it as an enemie to be cast out, when a soul is so straight with God, that help is desired to find out his enemies, *Psal.* 139. 23. 'Search me, O God, and know my heart, trie me and 'know my thoughts; And see if there be any wicked way in me: It's good when a Christian resisteth sin that's obvious to him, but it's better, when he desireth Gods help to discover secret sins that may be lurking in his heart, that he may oppose every sin, though thus give him more matter of mourning, yet being sincere he must pursue sin to the utmost.

4. And doth it not endear thy heart to God, when thou get'st help of this nature, that thy greatest enemie triumpheth not over thee? Yea. for the very hope that he will subdue thy iniquity, *Mic.* 7. 19.

5. Is

5. Is not ſin bitter to thee, even when thou haſt no preſent thoughts of wrath to follow upon thy ſin? I do not ſay but its lawful to mourn for fear of wrath, but it's comfortable to a Chriſtian when he can Obſerve, that ſometimes on the firſt diſcovery of ſin, before any thought of its woful fruit come into his mind, it forthwith woundeth his heart, for then it appears to be Grief for ſin, becauſe it's ſin, which is true godly ſorrowing, we find *Pſal.* 65. 3. 'Iniquities prevail 'againſt me, as for our tranſgreſſions thou ſhalt purge them away. Here is ſin lamented as bitter, when yet there is faith in the very time that theſe ſins ſhall be purged away; thou has cauſe to be comforted to whom ſin is bitter when thou haſt greateſt expectations of pardon, and the remembrance of thy ſin melting thy heart into the greateſt grief, when thou conſidereſt the tender mercies of thy God, in pardoning all thy iniquities; ſins againſt Love gives the Child of God the deepeſt Wounds, haſt thou it not to ſay, that the thoughts of Hell and Wrath hath often left thy heart very obdured? But the thoughts of Gods Love, and care of thy Soul hath ſoftned, and poured it out in mourning, that ever thou ſhouldeſt provoke him to anger who is ſo gracious to thee.

6. Canſt thou not give ſome Inſtances of particular ſins, that are now in a great meaſure ſubdued, and thy heart departed from them, by nothing that thou canſt know of but by the Grace of God? ſuch ſins as thou waſt once a very ſlave unto? canſt thou not now ſay that by the Grace of God thy feet are kept from falling in a great meaſure, *Pſalms* 18. 36. Thy turning from ſin, is the ſureſt evidence of Repentance, *Pſalms* 119. 59,

5. We are obliged alſo to try our Obedience to God.

Firſt, Becauſe Chriſt will not own us for his friends, if we be not found obedient to him *John* 15. 14. 'Ye are my friends, 'if ye do whatſoever I command you. Therefore as we would enjoy the happineſs and comfort of this friendſhip, we muſt ſtudy Obedience, as we would have his Countenance lifted

up upon us at his Table, and be used as his Friends indeed; we must endeavour to have it clear that we obey him from the heart, *Rom.* 6. 17.

2. By our Obedience we testifie whose servants we are, *Rom.* 6. 16. 'Know ye not that to whom ye yield your selves 'servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whe-'ther of sin unto death, or of Obedience unto Righteousness. This therefore should be carefully tried, if the course of our life be serious to the Lord, if we be indeed his servants he will make us eat, but others shall be hungry, his servants shall eat of the hidden Manna, ye shall have his Companie when others are far from any fellowship with him, *John* 12. 26. 'And where I am, there shall also my servant be: If 'any man serve me, him will my Father honor. As ye would enjoy all these, the verie choicest of mercies. 1. To eat the best of Soul-food. 2. To be accepted into near Communion with Christ. 3. The Father to put honor upon you. 4. As ye would sing for joy when others houl for vexation of spirit, and 5. As ye would at length serve him, and see his Face together, *Rev.* 22. 3 4. Labour to have it secured that ye are entred into his service; and let it not discourage you from this search into your serving and obeying of him, that ye find great failings: for he whose servant ye desire to be, hath the tongue of the learned, and is able to furnish you with such distinctions as that ye may be found faithful, though not perfect servants; he saw it necessary to have that recorded for encouraging all the sincere in heart, *Matthew* 26 41. 'The 'Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. And that some persons of many failings, yet their heart was perfect all their dayes as *Asa*, 2 *Chron.* 15. 17. The Lord knoweth how to manage his own Peoples heart so, as these condescentions shall not be perverted into a Latitude for sinning, but only to strengthen when they are under fears, that their service is not accepted: this the Apostle *Paul* comforteth himself, that though he found a Law hindering him from the good

he

he would, 'yet he delighted in the Law of God after the in-'ward man, *Rom.* 7. 22. Nor was this Comfort only *Pauls*, but remaineth to be a great encouragement to every Christian who can say without deluſion or diſsimulation, that he findeth his heart inclined and ſet upon Obedience to God in all things, *Pſalms* 119. 112. 'I have inclined my heart to 'perform thy Statutes alwayes, even unto the end.

3. The Lords Table ſhould be approached in Obedience to his Command. A Communicant ſhould be engaged to that Ordinance, not only becauſe of the rich benefits he may expect there, if he be ſeeking Chriſt, but becauſe of his Command, '*Do this in remembrance of me*, and therefore ſhould Examine if a Principle of Obedience leadeth him to that work, and for your help to find out the ſincerity of your Obedience, Examine,

Firſt, If thou ſeekeſt the Lords Precepts; that not onlie thou endeavoureſt to perform what thou alreadie knoweſt, but leſt any Duty be omitted, thou ſearcheſt for thy Dutie, this was a Comfort to the man of God. *Pſal.* 119. 45. 'I will 'walk at Liberty becauſe I ſeek thy Precepts; Thus we find the man of God, ſo often praying that he would teach him his Law, and not hide his Commandments from him, *Pſalm* 119. 19.

2. When Duty is diſcovered to you, and that it's the preſent Seaſon for ſuch a Duty; Dare ye not deferr it, conferring with fleſh and blood to darken a clear Duty: as many do who have no mind to obedience, taking pains that it may appear no Duty, which once was made clear; Diſputing their Light into Darkneſs, which becometh a Snare to their Souls, putting Light for Darkneſs and Darkneſs for Light, *Iſaiah* 5 20. But if the Laws of God be ſo written in thy heart, that thou 'makeſt haſte and delayes not to 'keep his Commandments, as *Pſalms* 119 60. Then thou art in the way to the ſame comfort expreſſed, verſe 57. Thou 'art my portion O Lord.

3. Is it not the deſire of thy Soul to be alwayes in ſome

obedience to God, *Psal.* 119 44. I will keep thy Law continually, art thou afraid to be out of path of duty at any time? never thinking thy self safe but when thou art obeying God? even in thy worldly concerns or whatever thou hast to do? and canst thou go from one duty to another willingly as the Lord directeth? though thou be engaged in a Dutie very pleasant to thee, yet if the Lord call thee to another, thou goest not grudgingly to it, not wishing in thy heart that God had not commanded it, but judging all his Commandments to be right, *Psalms* 119 128. Thou dare not carve out thy own Work, thou dare not be wiser than thy Lord, saying, such a piece of work would do better than that he requires; for to be a follower of God is sufficient to thee, this is the Principle of his Children, as *Ephes.* 5. 1.

4. Hath God made thee serious and frequent in Prayer, that he would teach thee to do his will, not only to know it, but do it, *Psal* 143. 10. 'Teach me to do thy will. Dost thou improve the Promise of the new Covenant for new Obedience. I will write my Laws in their heart, *Hebrews* 8. 10. And draweſt Grace out of Christs fulness for doing of his will, *John* 1. 16. Go then and get more where he offereth himself.

5. Is it the rejoycing of thy heart when God helpeth thee to obey, with spiritual cheerful Gospel-obedience, when he maketh thy feet as hinds, *Psal.* 18. 33. So that thou runnest, and dost not weary, and if thou find thou hast not obeyed God from the heart in any Duty, though men should give thee applause, and be saying God appeared in such a performance, yet thy heart is heavy and ready to sink within thee, for want of the Testimony of a good Conscience, knowing thou not didst serve God in spirit? Dost thou frame thy Duties for Gods Eye, and not for mans? Is pleasing of him thy studie? canst thou safely averr it with any Confidence in the sight of God, that notwithstanding of many failings, yet it is thy constant endeavour to please him, then thou mayest

have

have Confidence toward God, 1 *John* 3. 21. 22. 'Beloved 'if our heart condemn us not, then have we Confidence to- 'ward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, 'because we keep his Commandments, and do those things 'that are pleasing in his sight: And for thy Comfort whom God hath made sincere, compare this with the words of the same Apostle, 1 *John* 1. 8. 'If we say that we have 'no sin we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us. Here you may see how these two things consist in the same Persons, 1. The sense of remaining sin, and imperfections, and yet 2. The certainty of doing these things that please God, whereupon the Conscience is comforted, and Holy Confidence ariseth: but let that still be remembred, that what we do can only be acceptable, and our selves accepted in the Beloved.

6. Dost thou take care not to be ashamed of thy Lord's words? but confessest him before men: then take comfort from what Christ saith, *Matth.* 10. 32. 'Whosoever there- 'fore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also 'before my Father which is in Heaven; and mind what followeth in the next verse, 'But whosoever shall deny me 'before Men, him will I also deny: And though we have not often the occasion of such publick confessions, as many blessed Witnesses had before us, yet while we converse with men on Earth, we shall still be found either confessing Christ, his Words, and true Godliness; or ashamed and fainting: Great may be their Comfort who a vow Holiness in all Companies. This is the more to be adverted, because if some Christians be permitted to keep their chambers, or much retired from converse with men, then they obtain some measure of comfortable exactness in their Practice; but no sooner engaged in company but some fainting appears, shrinking from their former exactness, and failing of the Duties required in all company, sinfully forgetting God, whereby they often return with loss to their souls, and a con-

demning Conſcience. Therefore let the fear of being denied by Chriſt, ſtill influence thy deportment, more than fear of mens diſpleaſure. 7. When thou art helped in ſome ſincerity to obey thy Lord, having a reſpect to all his Commands, endeavouring to act all thy obedience by Grace out of Chriſts fulneſs, and taking delight to do his will; yet art thou not of the ſame mind that Chriſt requireth, *Luke* 17. 10. 'When 'ye ſhal have done all theſe things which are commanded you 'ſay, we are unprofitable ſervants: though ye take comfort in obeying from the heart, as an evidence of Gods Grace and Favour, yet dare not truſt to it, as a procuring Cauſe of the leaſt of your mercies? thou thinkeſt in heart there is no more cauſe to boaſt of the beſt of thy performances, than if a man ſhould declare himſelf a fool, by boaſting of filthie rags: then the Grace that helpeth thee to obey, maketh thee alſo humble, and of the poor in ſpirit, who are rich and bleſſed in Chriſt's account.

CHAP. IV.

Senſe of ſin neceſſary before Partaking.

The third Inference,

THis Bleſſed ordinance of Chriſt being the Communion of his Body and Blood: Then Communicants are to approach it with a humble ſenſe of their ſin, as needing the vertue of that precious Blood.

And that this is neceſſary, Conſider.

Firſt, That if ye have not the ſenſe of your ſin, you cannot duelie regard a Crucified Chriſt; and ſo may miſtake the whole work, deſpiſing his death as of no great uſe for you, and ſo cannot and will not apply his blood for purging away of Sin and Guilt: For thou art not ſenſible of Guilt: This

of

of it self were there nothing else, will make thee eat and drink unworthily; Undervaluing that Life-giving death, for the Communicants work is humbly and thankfully to receive a Crucified Christ represented in that Ordinance, as knowing they perish without him.

2. If there be no humbling sense of sin, thou shalt partake as an Hypocrite: pretending before God and men, that thou comest to embrace Christ as the only propitiation for thy sins; and yet there's no such thing on thy heart: Thou doest not judge thy self so guilty, or that ever thou provocked God to such Wrath, but that less might have served; Thou felt no such a Burden of thy sin, but such as thy self could bear with great ease, thou wondereſt there should be such a stirr in the World about sin, thou never committed any sin but thou hadst a Covering of thy own to cast over it, Thou couldest at any time after thy greatest Abominations with the Whorish Woman, *Prov.* 30. 20. 'Wipe thy mouth and say 'I have done no Wickedness? If thus thou comest to the Lords Table thou wilt but receive Bread and Wine, finding need of no more.

3. If thy sin do nothing smart and wound thee, thou wants the very best qualification of a Communicant, which is hungring after the Bread of Life, 'For he satisfieth the longing 'soul, *Psal.* 107. 9. The Lord hath his Eye upon such, more than all others, *Psalms* 66. 2. 'But to this man will I 'look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit; he findeth out such when others are passed by, such as are so sensible of their Guilt that they wonder that he should look upon them any other Way but to consume them, such as are ashamed to look up to him because of their iniquities, *Psalms* 40. 12. And yet are longing for a favorable look, they cannot look up, and yet cannot but look up, necessitie constraineth them to hang upon him for mercy, knowing they perish without him; such as these will be graciously visited and received, *Isaiah* 57. 15. He will Revive the Spirit of the humble, and revive the heart of the contrite

ones.

ones. But thou a stranger to these contritions of heart, will be a stranger also to these Revivings, and no wonder, for thou feelest no need of them, and therefore Consider.

4. That it's the way of God, first to wound, and then to Heal, Deut. 32. 39. *I wound, and I heal*: If thou didst never know any wounding of heart for sin, what Healing canst thou either expect or value; for no wounding, and no healing, no casting down, and no raising up, no sickness and no physician, For the whole need not the physician but the Sick; Thou hast no use for his coming with Healing under his Wings, Thou has nothing to Heal, he may spare his Visit untill thou has more need of him, and keep his Medicines for others. Thus thou mayest sit down at the Lords Table with the Best, but Christ and thy Soul have no Mercifull meeting. When the poor and needy are drawing out of Christs fulness, getting their Diseases Healed, and their Souls Restored, Thou art sent away Empty, neither art thou Disappointed, for thou sought after no more; Thou canst not complain of Christ, for he refused thee nothing thou sought, Thou art like these, Rev. 3. 17. I *have need of nothing*.

5. Consider also, that of all the meetings between Christ and poor sinners on this Earth, this is the most Endearing and Comfortable, when Sense of deep Guilt and deep Mercy meet together: Some times the poor sinner is ready to sink under the weight of Guilt, it's a Burden they cannot bear, the Fear of Gods Wrath and Separation from him being intollerable; The Soul chusing rather, if possible to be Reduced to nothing; and some times ready to Cry out, O happy no Beings, being compared with me, they shall have no Anguish, but my Anguish I can neither bear nor escape, no Mountains can cover me from my Judge, no Death will extinguish my Pain, but if I die in my sins my pain shall never Die, Death will flee from me; When thus the poor sinner is Bruised and can stand no longer,

longer, how gracious is that Meſſage, as *Job* 33. 24. 'Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ranſom. *And Ezek.* 16. 6. 'I ſaid unto thee when thou waſt in thy Blood, live. I die for thee that thou mayeſt not die, I am come that thou mayeſt have Life; then the bleſſing of theſe who were ready to periſh are poured out upon the Ranſomer. Then as *Mic.* 7. 18. 'Who is a God like unto thee, 'that pardoneth Iniquity. The deeper thy Senſe of Guilt be, being joyn'd with ſome hope of mercy, thou art in the ſurer way for the rich Conſolations of GOD, they that Sowe in Tears ſhall reap in Joy, the LORD hath appointed the Garment of Praiſe after the Spirit of Heavineſs, *Iſai.* 61. 3.

6. And though thou has no fear of Wrath; having ground to hope that thou art Reconciled to God by the Blood of Chriſt: Yet come humbly becauſe thy ſins are againſt ſuch Streams of Mercy runing upon thee, and paſſing by others; thou knoweſt that thou haſt never lived Suitable to the Greatneſs of thy Mercy, never fully payed thy Vows, never Glorified God in body and ſpirit, as it became one not his own but bought with a Price, much is required of thee, becauſe much is given thee; let the Senſe of this go deeper in thy heart; for if hope of Pardon make thy ſin eaſie; thou has cauſe to ſuſpect both thy ſelf and thy hope: There are no Convictions ſhould be more humbling than fooliſh requiting of the Lord, and no Grief more grieving than grieving of his ſpirit, who minded our griefs and knew our Souls in adverſities: Thou will not want Matter of humbling to take with thee to the Lords Table and need of Renewed application of that Precious Blood, If thou open thine eyes to ſee thy way, *Jer.* 2. 23.

7. Come humbly in the Senſe of thy ſin; that thou mayeſt value the leaſt of Mercy and the very Crumbs that fall from his Table, and if ſuch a full Cup of Conſolation be not poured out to thee as to others, or as at other times

to

to thy ſelf; yet to Juſtify God in thy heart not thinking thou haſt hard meaſure, not wondering if he hide his face from thee, but rather wondring if it ſhine upon thee, Conſidering thy Provocations: This true Senſe of thy unworthineſs will make thee think, O that I may have a Cup of Salvation when I go to his Table, whether it be a Cup of preſent Conſolation or not.

And that thou may'ſt approach with ſome humbling ſenſe of thy ſin. Conſider, that there muſt be ſome more deadly poiſon in ſin, then we do apprehend, when no leſs doth expiate the guilt, than the Blood, which is called the Blood of God, that no other Sacrifice nor Offering could avail. Study O Chriſtian to know more of the demerit of ſin, the greatneſs of the Juſtice of God, that would accept of no other Atonement, and the greatneſs of thy deliverance; if thou art now a Believer, that the weight of wrath is not come upon thee; And think with thy ſelf, thou by thy ſins pierced him, thou brought bleſſed Jeſus to ſweat theſe drops of Blood, thou preſſed on him with the weight of thy ſins, until he cryeth out, *My GOD, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me.* Canſt thou want a humbling ſenſe of ſin, and think this was for thee? Canſt thou yet mind it, and not mourn? What hateful hearts have we, that are not more pierced with the Piercing of Chriſt, and a wonder, if many of us find an intereſt in that Death, wherewith we are ſo little concerned.

2 Be Particular and Impartial, in ſearching out the Aggravations of thy Sin, from thy Youth up; and when convictions ariſe in thy Conſcience, choke them not, but intertain them as a Mercy, until they be ripened for gracious humbling? Thou may'ſt ſoon lay aſide thy convictions, but not ſo ſoon take them up again, it may be God gave thee the mercy of many Convictions, but thy love to ſin has maſtered them all, that now thy Conſcience lets thee ſin with eaſe, being ſeared, and thy heart hardned; and no wonder for many wakenings of Conſcience that ſtill end in ſecurity, makes

our hearts as the Iron, many heats, and many cools, makes the Iron harder.

3. But when none of thy Meditations, or Convictions can soften thy heart, but thou can behold thy sin, and not grieve, and often confess it, yet canst not mourn, never get thy heart poured out to God, except some weight of Affliction press thee, and then thou wilt pour out a prayer when the Lord is chastening thee, and when thy affliction is over, the pouring out of thy heart is at end: I say, when nothing prevaileth with thy obdured heart yet bless God, that there is a promised spirit of mourning, *Zech.* 12. 10. 'They shall look upon 'me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn. Cry to God for this help, that thou may'st go to this blessed Ordinance, as is expressed, *Jer.* 50. 4. 'going and weeping, *and ver.* 5. 'Joyn thy self to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant.

CHAP. V.

Communion with Christ should be known before Partaking.

The fourth Inference.

IF that the worthy Receiver at the Lords Table obtain the Communion of his Body, and Blood: then Communicants are obliged to understand what that is which is called Communion with Christ, before they Partake, lest they be found ignorant of it when they Partake: Consider then that true Communion with Christ being the happiness and honour of all who obtain it, meriteth the greatest seriousness, to know how sinful Mortals partake of it: And though it be wonderful, yet the exceeding riches of free Grace hath made it sure: for Believers have the priviledge of of entering into the holiest by the Blood of Jesus, and so obtain a more gracious nearness to God, than those who remain

only

only in the outer Court; and that this may appear for the incouragement of those who still retain a value for it, but fears that this fellowship is reserved wholly for a better life; I shal by the help of God, shew first that Believers in this life partake a peculiar and intimate fellowship with Christ. *Secondly*, Its preparatory Antecedents, whereby they are brought unto it. And *Thirdly*, Wherein it consisteth, and the way how it's enjoyed, so far as God giveth to understand it, I can promise the Reader no more.

For the *First*. This blessed Communion with the Lord, is not only Commanded both in the Old and New Testament, *Mic.* 6. 8. 'Walk humbly with thy God *John* 15 4. 'Abide 'in me, and I in you: and so is made the plain Duty of the People of God to seek after it, but is also promised, *Psal.* 140. 13. 'The upright shall dwell in thy presence, *John.* 14. 23. We will come unto him, and make our abode with him; So that believers may expect success to their Prayers, and endeavours after Communion with God, 'For faithful is he who 'hath promised, *Heb* 10. 23.

Secondly, The near Union that is between Christ and Believers, doth undeniably prove this Communion, he being the Head, and Believers the Body, supplied in every part by the Head, *Eph* 4 16 He the Vine, and we the Branches, *Joh.* 15. 5. The very design and scope of these similitudes is, to hold forth Christs continued Communications, and the Believers Participation.

Thirdly, The experience of the godly who have published it doth also prove its certainty, 1 *John* 1. 3 'And truely our 'fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. *Cant* 2.3. 'I sat under his shadow with great delight.

Fourthly, Believers remarking his drawing near, and withdrawings from their souls, *Cant.* 5 1. He hath come into his Garden, and *Cant.* 5 6. 'He had withdrawn himself, *Lam.* 3. 57. 'In the day when I cryed, thou dreweſt near, and *Psal.* 13 1. 'Why hidest thou thy Face, &c.

Fifthly, This Communion with Christ, is of such necessity, that

that a Believer can do nothing without it, and on this account, Christ requireth his followers to abide in him, *Joh.* 15. 5. So that they do but discover their Ignorance, and estrangement from God, who think there is no nearer Communion with him necessary, than the external administration of Ordinances, by the Word and Sacraments; for many do enjoy these externally, and do only draw near to God with their lips, and their hearts far from him, *Isa.* 29. 13. The godly man findeth it good to draw near to him, and so near as to find him the strength of his heart, *Psal.* 73 26. That is intimate Communion indeed, to have the Lord the strength of a mans heart, Oh that our merciful God would give the understanding of this to many, who have never thought on so near a help as this; for such may well go in the strength of the Lord God to any work he requireth, himself being the strength of their heart; What if our heart be found as a dried withered branch of a Vine that is fit for no work, yet that witheredness shall not be known, when he cometh to be the strength of our heart.

For the second thing proposed. how the People of God are brought into this Communion with Christ.

First, The *Fountain* of it is the eternal and free love of God, whereby so many as pleased the Father are given to the Son, by that eternal, mysterious and merciful tranlaction between the Father and him, and by him to be redeemed and prepared for the everlasting enjoyment of God, compare *Joh.* 17 6 'Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, *with John* 6.37. 'All that the *Father* giveth me, shal come unto me. He will effectually draw them into his Communion, they shal come unto me, and so must meet together. 2. According to this glorious tranfaction in the Covenant of Redemption, the eternal Son of God, is declared to have his delight with the Sons of men, before the foundation of the World, *Prov.* 8. 31. Fore-known unto God, are all his Works from the Beginning, things future being as present to his intuition;

So

So that the Son of God hath always taken pleasure in the sons of the sons of men, who were given him of his Father. 3. Pursuant to the same transaction, and in order to its accomplishment; It pleased the Son of God often to appear before his Incarnation in the similitude of man on earth, and converse with men as a fruit of his eternal delight in them, and a prelude of his Incarnation, as one hasting this gracious nearness, and more conspicuous Communion with him, *Gen.* 32. 24. 'Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him, *Dan.* 3. 24. He appeareth as a man keeping Company with the three godly men in the Furnace, and his form appeared also as the Son of God, this fourth glorious man made the place designed for torment to the three, a place of Joy, and a very Paradise. 4. In order to the same partaking of Communion with God, a Covenant of Grace is Published, which is a marriage Covenant, *Isa.* 54. 5. 'Thy 'maker is thine husband, 2 *Cor.* 11. 2. 'I have espoused you 'to one husband by vertue of this honourable relation, Believers may plead for his dwelling with them in this holy Communion. 5. In due time the Son of God was incarnate, taking unto him our nature, that his fellowship might be the more agreeable to our nature, and we come the more familiarly unto him; and thereby to have the more feeling Sympathy with us, *Heb.* 2. 14. 'For asmuch then as the 'Children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself 'likewise took part of the same, that through death he might 'destroy him that had the power of death, *and ver.* 18. For in 'that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to 'succour them that are tempted. Having taken our nature, he continued for some time in the world, and conversed with men especially his own, *Joh.* 1. 15. 'He dwelt among us, and 'we beheld his glory. And though this people were not always to have his bodily presence; Yet at that time he did manifest so much of his power, meekness, patience, and mercy; that thereby he did facilitate the knowledge of spiritual Communion with him, some also beheld his glory, and had Spiritual Communion with him, while he was in the

World.

World. 6. After he had given a gracious taste of his Fellowship, and given instructions for its continuance in a spiritual manner, in his own appointed time he purchased reconciliation for all that were given him, laying down his life for them, that being reconciled by his Blood, they might be capable of fellowship, being agreed they might walk together, and 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. 'The just suffered for the unjust, 'that he might bring us to God. *and Eph.* 2. 13. But now 'in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off, are made 'nigh by the Blood of Christ. So that his suffering were to bring his People into this gracious Fellowship with God. 7. In order to their actual Fellowship with him, he qualifieth them by pouring out of his Spirit, *Ezek.* 36. 26. 'A new 'heart will I give, and a new spirit will I put within you. Whereby they are made meet for the Masters use, as a sanctified People, 2 *Tim.* 2. 21. Without this, there could be no Communion with a holy God, our perverse natures being rather inclined to hide our selves from him, and say, *Let the* Almighty depart from us; but by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, they have the spirit of Love, whereby the desire of their soul is toward him, his Fellowship comes to be their deliberate and delectable choice; So great a change doth the Spirit of Grace make, *Eph.* 2. 22. 'In whom also you 'are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit. And by the same spirit, they obtain the Grace of Faith, which is a fruit of the Spirit, *Gal.* 5 22. And by this Faith they receive Jesus Christ himself, *Joh.* 1. 12. Then we are united to Christ by receiving him, and being united to him, he dwelleth in our hearts by Faith, *Eph.* 3. 17. So that Communion with Christ doth infallibly follow upon our union with him, for where he is received, there he dwelleth; no wonder Faith be called precious, seing thereby we are brought into this inestimable benefit, of having Christ the hope of Glory dwelling in us, not for any intrinsick worth of our faith, but according to *Rom.* 4. 16 'Therefore it is of 'faith, that it might be by grace, free grace began it, free

grace

grace carrieth it on, free grace will perfect this Communion, in placeing the Believer there, whence he ſhall go no more out, but be for ever with the Lord, and where it began, there muſt its eternal center be, 'Even the praiſe of the glory of 'his grace, *Eph.* 1. 6.

The 3d thing is to know more particularly, wherein this Communion with Chriſt doth conſiſt, and how we partake it, which we are to conſider theſe two ways,

Firſt, As believers are receivers only of Communications from Chriſt. 2. As they are made active themſelves in entertaining this Communion.

For the Firſt, Believers are ſaid to be partakers of Chriſt himſelf, *Heb.* 3. 14. They have him, he is theirs a great intereſt, a great gift! Shall he not with him freely give us all things. *Rom.* 8. 32. A large Inheritance broader than the Earth, larger than the utmoſt Heaven of Heavens, the light and glory of the beſt and pureſt Heaven, what thought of the Worm man can apprehend aright of this Wonder? That, that one may be ſaid to be ours, *Cant.* 2. 16. 'He is mine, and I am his. Believers partake of Chriſt, as to both his natures, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. We are made partakers of the Divine Nature, they partake of his love and favour, and thereby admitted to a gracious acceſs, *Eph* 3. 12. 'In whom we have boldneſs, and acceſs. 2. They have the benefit of his Divine Attributes, Omnipotency, Wiſdom, Holineſs, Mercy, &c. *Ezek.* 36. 9. 'For 'behold I am for you, The Believer alſo hath the benefit of his humane Nature, *Heb.* 4. 15. 'For we have not an High-'prieſt which cannot be touched with the feeling of our In-'firmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, and 'yet without ſin. This ſweetneth and ſtrengtheneth our Communion, as the words of the following *Ver.* ſheweth, *Let us therefore come with boldneſs to the throne of Grace.*

2. Believers have Communion with Chriſt in his Offices: as to his Prieſtlie Office, he is our Paſſeover Sacrificed for us, 1 *Cor.* 5. 7. The Believer is bleſſed for ever, by that one Offering. *Heb.* 10. 4. As to this prophetical Office,

Chriſt

Christ is the great Prophet, *Deut.* 18. 18. Whom we are to hear, 'Who is made of God unto us Wisdom, 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. Thus we have that benefit of an understanding to know him that is true, 1 *John* 5. 20. Here also our debt by partaking of Christ is deep; for we were blind, and had remained so for ever, if he did not open the Eyes of the blind. So also as he is King in *Zion*, *Psal.* 2. 6. And King of Saints, *Rev.* 15. 3. Thus he maketh a blessed conquest of us unto himself, making us a willing people by his power, *Psal.* 110. 3. There is no more to do when he pleaseth, but arise and follow me; and it's done, *Mat.* 9. 9. Thus he ruleth in Believers, subduing their Iniquities. Thus his People are commanded to rejoyce greatly, because of their King, *Zech.* 9. 9. Here also Believers share deep in Communion with Christ, bearing them through the throng of enemies within and without safely to Heaven, and making themselves Kings, and Priests unto their God, *Rev.* 5. 9.

3 Our blessed surety, and Redeemer, not only died to bring us to God, but to secure this Communion, carrieth the Believer still along with him, for in his resurrection he hath them together with him; they are quickned together with Christ, *Eph.* 2 5 And raised up together, ver. 6. That very act of power that raised him from the dead, raiseth all his: They were dead in sins, and while such, they were incapable of Communion with God, but by vertue of Christs Resurrection, they are quickened, and qualified, for converse with the living God, so that there also the allowance is large, and the Communion near, being raised up together with Christ.

4. In his ascension, he doth not leave them as to spiritual Communion with them, for when he is ascended and the World seeth him not, yet Believers by faith see him: *John* 14. 19. 'The World seeth me no more, but ye see me: and whereseoever he go, because he liveth, they shall live also, then their Communion with him still holdeth, the influences of life continuing upon Believers, they live with him, and see him when the World cannot see him.

5. And when he is ſet down at the right Hand of God; yet there they are not forgot, 'for he appeareth in the preſence of God for them, *Heb.* 9. 24. And continueth his interceſsion, for perfecting of this bleſſed Communion: he ever liveth to make intercceſsion, the Believer hath Communion with him as his Advocat, to plead his cauſe before the Father; 1 *John* 2. 1. He hath not turned off his people on earth, when he is exalted himſelf; O happy intereſt in Chriſts love, that nothing can ſeparate, no increated, inconceivable pleaſure and glory in the high and lofty place, cauſing any forgetfulneſs of the poor weary Travellers, longing to be with him, but what ever they have to do there, he is ready, and will appear their advocat and do their work: ſo that when they have finished their courſe, they shall have no more to do but enter into peace, all being friends where they go, and all this by him.

6. And when he cometh again, accompanied with his mighty Angels, to judge the world, yet Believers muſt ſtill be near him; 'therefore they are ſet on his right hand, *Mat.* 25. 33. But this is not all, 'for they shall be ſet on Thrones 'alſo, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael, *Mat.* 19. 28. They cordially conſenting to his judging, and what ſentence he shall paſs: neither is this all, but more is yet coming, with what humility, reverence, ſobriety, and admiration should we think on theſe words following? *Joh.* 17. 22. 'And the 'glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them: that they 'may be one, even as we are one, and *Rev.* 3. 21. 'To him 'that overcometh, will I grant to ſit with me in my Throne: He only who ſpake theſe words, can give us to underſtand them for our good and comfort, without erring by proud, vain, and dangerous imaginations; but let us obſerve theſe two things, 1. That the glory of the Believer is ſtill to be near Chriſt. 2. That he who before time had his delight with the ſons of men, continueth his love, untill he ſet them down in heavenly places together with himſelf: ſo that this bleſſed Communion was eternally deſigned, and shall be eternally enjoyed.

And

And now in time, is the season to have it secured, before we enter into that eternity; what pains can be sufficient for a pledge of being for ever with the Lord? Oh, that so few of men appointed to an eternity, mind where it shal be, whither with Christ, or with Devils: a little more time will discover it, and time is precious on this very account, that we are as yet called into fellowship with the Son of God, & may have hope of such a beginning of it here, 'as nothing present, or to come shall separat, 1 *Cor.* 1. 9.

Blessed Jesus Christ hath opened a door for it by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the Vail, that is to say, *his flesh*, Heb. 10. 10.

He hath opened his door, and standeth knocking: knocking at our doors for this fellowship. He hath a desire to use his followers as friends, and to admit them unto a comfortable Communion with him. *John* 15. 15. 'Henceforth I call 'you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his 'lord doth: but I have called you friends; for all things that 'I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you. Which is not so to be understood, as if they were no more to serve him; for when they are at their best, 'his servants 'shall serve him, and see his face; *Rev.* 22. 3. And well may it serve the best of them, at their best. But the matter is, that believers are admitted to more than the ordinary priviledge of servants, which is to have great Mysteries & Secrets communicated to them; for so our Lord explaineth it, 'the servant 'knoweth not what his Lord doth, but I have made known 'to you, &c. He sometimes openeth the very secret counsel of God to them; 'the Father himself loveth you, *Joh.* 16. 27. And *Psal.* 25. 14. 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him. This leadeth me to the second thing proposed; that Believers are made active in entertaining this Communion, wherein Christ and the Believer do intimately converse together as friends; though with a due distance on their part: this communion is the very life of a Believer, *Gal.* 2. 20. 'I 'live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: this only maketh the Believer fruitful. *Joh.* 16. 4. 'Abide in me, and I in you.

'As the branch cannot bear fruit of its ſelf, except it abide in the Vine: for the better underſtanding of this actual fellowſhip with Chriſt, I ſhall premit theſe few things.

Firſt, That though the Infinite and Immenſe Divine Majeſty, be not far from every one of us; 'for in him we live, 'and move, and have our being, *Acts* 17. 28. Yet as to his gracious preſence, ſome are ſaid to be far off, *Pſalms* 73. 27. 'They that are far from thee ſhall periſh: and we are required to draw nigh to him, *James* 4. 8. And theſe who were far off, are made nigh, *Eph.* 2. 13. So that theſe Expreſsions of being near unto, or far from God are ſcriptural: and therefore ſhould not be miſtaken, or ſtumbled at by any, on the account that God is every where preſent.

2. There is no ſpecial and gracious Communion with Chriſt, where there is not firſt Union with him by faith: ſome wonder they have not that communion with Chriſt that they read and hear of, but conſider not the reaſon that they are not agreed, and ſo cannot walk together. How confidently, and I fear ignorantly, do ſome ſpeak of Communion with God, as if it were due to them, who as yet are uncapable of it, untill they be reconciled to God, there being no entering into the holieſt but by the blood of Jeſus.

3. After a poor ſinner is united to Chriſt by faith, he is never altogether deprived of ſome Communion with him, *John* 14. 19. 'Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo, and Chriſt dieth no more; and *verſe* 23. 'We will make our abode with him. And 'he that believeth ſhall never die, *John* 11. 26.

4 Yet every Believer is not admitted to the ſame degree of nearneſs, as to the manifeſtations of Gods gracious preſence, every Believer getteth not his Face to ſhine with that glory as *Moſes*, *Exod.* 34. 29. Yet he manifeſteth himſelf to all who firmly love him. *John* 14. 33.

5. The beſt of Believers obtain not in this life, that degree of nearneſs which ſometimes they deſire; when *Moſes* got his face to ſhine, yet was he covered with the hand of God, and did ſee but his Back-parts, after he had beſeeched God

to

to shew him his Glory, *Exodus* 33. 18. 22. 23.

6. Nor doth one and the same Believer, enjoy the same degree of this nearness at all times; *Moses* had fellowship with God, before that time his face did shine; So the Disciples who were on the mount, must come down and take share with other Believers, of that which was ordinary; you may be sitting under Christs shadow with great delight this day, and in a little time crying out, 'saw ye him whom my 'soul loveth, my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone, *Cant.* 5. 6.

7. Sometimes Believers do not discern in the very time, how near they are unto God, and he to them, *Gen.* 28. 18. 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. And sometimes he maketh them know distinctly, that they have fellowship with him, *Cant.* 5 1. And themselves can give an account of their fellowship, *Cant.* 3. 4. 'I found him 'whom my Soul loveth, I held him, &c.

8. There is sometimes strengthning Communion with Christ, when heir Comfort is not so great as at other times, *Psal.* 138. 3. 'In the day when I cryed, thou answeredst me, 'and strengthnedest me with strength in my soul. Here is prayer, and an answer to it, which is blessed Communion with God, and is made out by the strengthning of the Soul; so *Paul* 2 Cor. 12. 8. 'He besought the Lord thrice, and obtaineth a strengthning answer verse 9. 'My grace is sufficient for thee; this the Lord said to him, giving it him as his answer; this also was true Communion, and sometimes there is great delight in this fellowship, the Lord is free to dispose of it as he will. *Cant.* 2. 3. 'I sat under his shadow with great delight. *Ps.* 63. 7. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoyce. Who can but rejoyce, when they know they are admitted to such an Habitation, the Wings of the Almighty spread about them. It's also seriously to be observed, that when the Children of God make mention of their great joy in Communion with him, they are found usually clearing the soundness

of their joy, by the gracious help that their ſouls partake of; ſo in this Scripture, becauſe thou haſt been my help, I find it was true Communion I had, by the help I got; and therefore it is allowed Joy, *Pſal.* 28.7. 'My heart truſted in him, 'and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoyceth. Here is Communion with the Lord, for his heart truſted, and the Lord helped; and finding this help, he greatly rejoyceth. It's neceſſary for the people of God to try any joy they have in holie duties, whence it ariſeth: becauſe ſome may have delight in acts of worship, and yet have no fellowship with God, as *Iſa.* 58. 2. And many are apt to think, if they have joy and pleaſure in theſe duties, that then doubtleſs they have fellowship with God, which becometh a ſnare to them, not conſidering the deep deceit and hypocriſie of mans heart, which can eaſily ſtretch it ſelf in the externals of Religion, and that with pleaſure, that thereby they may think themſelves religious, as well as to be thought ſo by others; this yieldeth them ſome delight, and ſo much the more, that notwithſtanding of all they perform in Religion, they can reſerve their luſts, and Idols of heart entire, even the whoriſh Woman can delight in her peace-offrings to God, that ſhe may have the more peace in her wickedneſs. *Proverbs* 7. 14, 15. It's her delight ſhe can pleaſe God well enough with a ſhow and Ceremony of Religion, and her heart and practice go to her own pleaſure therefore; therefore all delight in worſhip is not ſound, and will not prove fellowship with God: for natural Vivacity, the Exerciſe of common Gifts, hope that it will pleaſe God, and ſometimes hope of the applauſe of men, may, and doth go a great length to make theſe Duties pleaſant, where there is neither joy in the Lord, nor ſanctifying Communion with him: That which is indeed the joy of the Lord, is ſtrengthning to us, *Neh.* 8. 10. 'The 'joy of the Lord is your ſtrength. And if you be admitted 'to gracious nearneſs, ſo as to behold him, we ſhall thereby be in ſome meaſure, changed into the ſame image, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. Theſe ſpiritual advances in godlineſs, and conformitie

to

tothe image of the Son of God, are the safest indications and proofs of the truth of our Communion with God.

9. Consider also, that this Communion of God is to be found, both in our worship and walk; for where he recordeth his Name, he cometh to his People, he meeteth with them, and blesseth them. *Exod.* 29. 43. As also in their practice, *Isa.* 64. 5. 'He meeteth him that rejoyceth and work-'eth righteousness: these things being premised, let us now consider, how this blessed Communion between Christ and Believers doth appear.

First, There is a peculiar knowledge, that Christ and Believers have of each other, *John* 10. 14. 'I am the good 'shepherd, I know my sheep, and am known of mine; tho' he knoweth all things, yet he knoweth them in a special manner, with approbation: and for his enemies, because they are rejected, he saith, *Matth.* 7. 23. 'Depart, I know you not. And therefore he manifesteth himself, where he designs to make abode, *Joh.* 14. 21, 23. 'They know his voice, *Cant.* 2. 8. 'The voice of my Beloved! behold he cometh: and verse 14. He knoweth their voice, 'Let me hear thy 'voice, for sweet is thy voice; strangers who never converse, know not the voice of one another: they who are his, know his voice, that they (*will*) follow his voice, and will flie from the voice of a stranger, *John* 10. 45. They know his voice when he speaketh to them by his Ordinances, and when they observe his voice, there they attend; knowing the danger of souls, to take the voice of strangers for his: they know his call and knock, *Cant.* 5. 2. 'It is the voice of 'my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me: and he understandeth their secret moans, *Jer.* 31. 18. 'I have heard *Ephraim* bemoaning himself, thus Christ and Believers have a peculiar way of acquaintance, that is unknown to others.

2. They mutually mind others in love, he hath them ever 'graven on the palms of his hands: *Isa.* 49. 16. And they remember him in his wayes, and these the Lord meeteth with, *Isa.* 64. 5. 'Thou meetest him that rejoyceth, and worketh righteousness

'righteouſneſs, thoſe that remember thee in thy wayes: He is the good High-prieſt, that beareth the names of his people on his hearts & the deſire of their ſoul goeth toward him: *Iſai.* 26. 8. It is the Believers great joy, to think that he mindeth him, *Pſal.* 40. 17. 'I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me: How ſatisfying is it to cordial Friends, when they are aſſured that whatever they be, yet are affectionately minded by a friend of worth: if a man live until moſt of his intimat friends are gone, what a bare comfortleſs world do they leave him: When friends and familiars are put far from him, he ſees none that he can unboſom his ſoul to, this maketh the World like a very wilderneſs to him: but here is a Brother born for the day of adverſity; when Father and Mother, or moſt ſympathiſing friends are removed, yet he is the ſame, yeſterday, to day, and for ever, he ſupplieth all; and often deareſt Friends are removed from Believers, that Chriſt himſelf may be their All, that himſelf may have their heart and fellowship more intirely; they uſed to run to their Sympathiſing friends with every grief, and it may be before they went to Chriſt with it, which Chriſt obſerving in any with whom he determines fellowship, turneth the Ciſterns utterly dry one way or another, and then the man muſt come to the fountain, or faint: bleſſed Jeſus loves to be remembred by his people, he writteth a Book of remembrance, for them who thought upon his name, *Mal.* 3. 16. Complains when they forget him, *Jer.* 2. 32. 'My people have forgotten me 'days without number: But when his people come to be well acquainted with the bleſsings of his fellowship, 'the 'meditation of him becomes ſweet, *Pſal.* 104. 34. The love they have to him, makes remembring of him habitual, native, and in ſome reſpect eaſie: rather a pain to be long without thoughts of him, and the ſame love makes it moſt uneaſy to be forgotten by him; it is as death to them, if they think their Lord forgetteth them, *Pſal.* 88. 5. 'Free among the dead, like the ſlain that ly in the grave, whom thou remembreſt no more.

3. There

3. There is pains taken for this blessed Fellowship on both sides, though the unequality be greater than we can imagine; he being at the greatest pains & expence, who hath no need of such company, yet he is found standing and knocking at our Door, pursueing this Fellowship, *Rev.* 3.20. 'Behold, I stand 'at the door, and knock: If any man hear my voice and open 'the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he 'with me. It is Communion with thee I am seeking, and let me have it: I wil sup with thee, and it shall not be at thy Charges, I will bear the Coast, all is provided, And you shall find it meat indeed: how many wonders are in this love, that the Prince of the Kings of the Earth should thus urge our nearness! As if he were to have some great prize, is this the manner of men? Where did you ever hear of a King in possession of his Kingdom and Splendor, come to a poor mans Door, and stand there waiting for a Word of him, or to let him in to do him good: I think this passeth all thoughts, but silent Admiration, yet he standeth there till he complain, 'that his Locks are wet with the 'drops of the night, *Cant* 5.2. This increaseth the wonder, but however wonderful, glory to God that we safely may and must believe it; on the other hand, the Believer having tasted of the blessings of his fellowship, cryeth out, 'O when 'wilt thou come unto me? *Psal.* 101. 2 *and Cant.* 1.7. Let me know where thou feedest, that I may feed there, I can feed no where but where thou art, this meeting cannot but hold at last, when both are on the way to other.

4. And when the Believer doth so meet with Christ, as that he knoweth he is come, by the lifting up of his countenance, with how great joy is he received, *Isa.* 12.1. 'Tho' thou 'wast angry, yet thou hast turned away from thine anger, and 'comforted me; now thou art become my song and my salvation: how meanly do they think of any pains they have been at, in seeking after him? *Cant.* 3.4. 'It was but a little farther 'that I went, and I found him whom my Soul loveth. If it were to do, I would go on tho' I should be torn by the way;

for

for it's as life from the dead, when he cometh and bringeth healing under his wings, then it is that they ſit down under his ſhaddow with great delight, his countenance is the health of their countenance. *Pſal.* 42. 11. Then their Graces have a reviving and a new Spring; then their Spiknard caſteth forth its ſmell, 'when the King ſitteth at his Table. *Cant.* 1. 12. Then it is that worldly Comforts become inſipid, and of no value; then it is they ſay, 'what have I to do any 'more with Idols? *Hoſ.* 14. 8. When they ſit under his ſhaddow, they know then that no idols ever gave them ſuch entertainment; then they can ſay their Lines are fallen in pleaſant places. What out of Heaven can be compared to that complacence between Chriſt and Believers, when they can without terrour, converſe with God, and ſolace their ſouls in him? 'He delighting in them, *Iſa.* 62. 4. *And* 'they delighting in him, *Iſa.* 58. 14. And commanded to do it, *Pſal.* 37. 4. This made the godly Martyers go through flames chearfully to the full poſſeſſion of this Fellowſhip.

5. In this Communion, there is great freedom on both ſides: the Lord allowing them to pour out their hearts before him, *Pſ.* 62. 8. And they accordingly, as *Pſ.* 142. 2, 3. 'I poured 'out my complaint before him, I ſhewed before him my trou-'ble, when my ſpirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou 'knoweſt my path. They willingly expoſe all that is in their heart before him, and are content he ſearch them, *Pſal.* 139. 23. It would be an affliction to them, if their neareſt friends knew all that is in their hearts; but a ſincere Soul deſires to conceal nothing from him, but rather deſires his help to ſearch, fearing there may be evils in them which they cannot ſearch out themſelves, they dare not proudly boaſt, as if nothing evil were to be found in them, but humbly beg that he would ſee & heal, what they ſee not, and ſo far as they know, they lay their hearts open before him, their moſt ſecret ſins, complaining how they prevail againſt them, ſuch evils as they could reveal to none on earth: ſo alſo their doubts and temptations, their Griefs, their Fears, and what they deſire moſt, all

all their desire is before him, *Psal.* 38. 9. And blessed Jesus Christ, is faithful to them, and free with them, both as to necessary reproofs, 'I have somewhat against thee, *Rev.* 2. 4. And as to encouragement, 'Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, *Rev.* 3. 8. *and Psal.* 25. 14. He sheweth them his Covenant, he openeth it up to their understandings, and there they find all their Salvation, there they find relief as to their Sins, Doubts, and Fears, there they find their victory secured, for, *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him: and he will shew them his Covenant.*

6. In this Communion, there is still desire for more nearness to Christ, *Cant.* 8. 6. 'Set me as a seal upon thy heart. What boldness of Love is this? Oh, is there nothing will satisfie less than Christ's heart! They must be placed there, for his Love is their happiness. 2. They desire it may be made evident for their comfort as by a Seal, that thereby they may read his desires is toward them, this secureth their comfort, when they can say, *his desire is towards me, Cant* 7. 10. If it be thought never so great ambition, yet sincere love to Christ is kept in pain without some evidence of the Love of his heart; his mercies are sweet, his graces very sweet, but his heart is sweetest of all. I question, if there be any sincere love to Christ, where this is not desired, though such an habitation, such a seat as the heart of Christ cannot be enjoyed without admiration. 3. When it's said set me as a Seal, &c. That is, ratifie, & confirm this my Interest in thee, and Communion with thee, as by a Seal, that thy love shall be my allowance, and Communion with thee, my priviledge for ever. 4. When it's said, set thou me as a Seal, is as much as an humble acknowledgement, Lord I cannot place my self where I would be, I cannot bring my own soul to this near Communion with thee, but I commit it to thee, who can draw my heart to thy heart, I trust thy efficacious power, that what ever be my natural averseness to such holy Communion, yet my heart is under thy dominion, thou canst prepare and form it for thy self, all this salvation is

thy

thy own doing, and thou canst bear me up to this eminent part of it, to be so near as on thy heart: Therefore it's my humble request, that thou set me there, the Spouse doth not say, I will set my self there, but set thou me as a Seal &c. It's observable, that after *Moses* had near Communion with God on the Mount, yet he still presseth for more, *Exod.* 33. 13. 'I beseech thee shew me thy Glory. What he had obtained, did but excite his desires for more: and so it is with all who have the true beginning of Communion with God in this life, though they have it not in the manner *Moses* had, the Communications that Believers receive here are discoveries of a greater beauty and glory yet before them, and these fore-tasts captivate their love and desire, so as they cannot but pursue for greater discoveries, the first fruits they have found, are so sweet to their taste, that the more they get, the more they hunger, *Rom.* 8. 23.

7. That which Believers obtain in Communion with God, is so strengthning and comfortable, that the hideing of his face is most bitter, *Psal.* 30. 7. 'Thou didst hide thy face, and 'I was troubled. If there be no grief of heart upon the hideing of his Face, there is just cause of fear, that such persons have not known the shining of his Face; as on the other hand, these who diligently observe the Lords withdrawing from their souls, and are forthwith pained and wounded for his absence; do thereby testifie their acquaintance with the blessings of his presence, especially, if their grief be that they have provoked him to withdraw, and that his withdrawing is not only as to comfort, but as to the measure of strengthening Grace for mercy allowed them, the very fear of the Lords deserting doth often mix water in the best of their wine, that untill Christ and they be at home in their Fathers Kingdom, their brightest and most serene days, are often overcast with clouds, and therefore, when they do enjoy his gracious presence, fearing some alteration, though not of their fixed gracious estate, yet of their present blessings, cry out, *Stir not up, nor awake my love, till,* &c. *Cant.* 2. 7. O that he would

would stay, and not leave my soul destitute, and when he Cloud covereth them, O what a damp it giveth, then darkness, Jealousies, and Fears arise, as *Job* 29. 1. O that I were 'as in monerhs past, when his candle shined on my head, 'ver. 2. 3, 4. As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret 'of God was upon my Tabernacle, when the Almighty was yet with me. This godly mans desires were fulfilled, for *Job* 42 10. So the Lord turned the captivity of Job, *and ver.* 12. 'Blessed his latter end more than his beginning. But many now come to old age, are almost hopless, that they shal ever in this life be, as in the days of their youth, and decline so far, that they tempt themselves to doubt if ever the Almighty was with them, and his secret on their Tabernacle.

8. Where true Communion with God is, there its perfection is desired, not only to have that measure continued, which is here allowed, but to be for ever with the Lord, 1 *Thess* 4. 18. Here their *Fellowship* is but as seeing through a Glass, there it's often interrupted, as to its comforts, here a body of sin is still pressing them downward to this Earth, that they get not their Affections staid & fixed on things Above, here they are surrounded with snares & temptations, such as have made strong Cedars to shake; and therefore having already the first fruits of a better Countrey, they desire to be where he is, who hath taken up their hearts to himself: For to be with Christ, they sincerely think best of all, and *Heb.* 11. 16. 'But now they desire a better countrey, 'that is an heavenly. It's not some extraordinary persons only, who are of this mind, but all true Believers, for *Rev.* 22. 17. 'The spirit and the bride say, Come, Christ saith, I come quickly, and they agree, even so come Lord Jesus. 'The 'crown of righteousness is laid up for all who love his appearing, 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. So that it's dangerous for a Christian to want desires of this nature, for they are consistent with submission to his appointed time; but since the crown is laid up for such as love his appearing, every Christian is concerned to try, whether the meditations of that day be his terrour or delight,

these

these being a few of the great blessings found in Communion with God; there remaineth yet one difficulty which perplexeth some serious souls: that is how to have this blessed Communion ordinary, so as they may be said to walk with God, knowing that this walking with him is more than to perform some stated duties of Worship; the grounds whence this difficulty ariseth, are;

First, They hear and read of abiding in Christ, *Joh.* 15. 4. Setting the Lord always before our eyes, *Psal.* 16. 8. of waiting on God continually, *Hos.* 12. 6. of resorting continually unto him, *Psal.* 71. 3. When they think on such Scriptures, and withal the regard God hath to such as remember him in his ways, *Isa.* 64. 5. And such as thought on his Name, *Mal.* 3. 16. And his Indignation against these who forget God, *Psal.* 50. 22. These and the like passages being laid to heart, they think that God should be always actually remembred, and some few find great disquiet, if any considerable portion of time be spent without thoughts of God.

On the other hand, they find themselves concerned in worldly affairs, or Reading, Studying, &c. Which cannot be managed without serious & suitable thoughts to the work they are about; God clearly calleth them to these other things, it were sin in them to ruine their families, and neglect the duties of their stations, some of which duties may require a considerable portion of time, and seriousness in that time: now their strait is how to manage these external necessary Duties, without sinful forgetting of God.

A. 1. Whatever weakness may be found in this difficulty, yet it appears to flow from a good root of love to God, and fellowship with him, it's a savoury kind of trouble, yet;

2. It's not safe for a Christian, to arraign himself for a forgetter of God, when he is serving God in the duties of his station, but;

3. It will be found, that the bitterest ingredient of this acculation is, when there is opportunity for remembring God, without obstructing any other duty, that these opportunities

ties are not improved; and for the help of such who find trouble of this nature, as I know some for many years afflicted with it, I shall propose but these 4 things, leaving their usefulness to the blessing of God. 1. The continued exercise of the love of God 2. Performing our external Duties as Obedience to God. 3. Frequent retirments to God, & 4. Many ejaculations.

For the First, The lively exercise of the love of God, makes the remembrance of him delectable; a Christian hath a great advantage, when the desire of his Soul goes to it, for then he is so far from grudging that God have his affectionat thoughts, that he cannot be easily kept from them, this being one of the strong constraints of Love, to think on the object Beloved, you may observe the Spouse in the book of *Canticles* cannot be kept long from the thoughts of her Beloved; either seeking after him, or delighting in his Fellowship, or commending him to others; Christ's love is the surest Bond on the Soul, to prevent sinful forgetting, and if it decay, your thoughts and meditations will decay with it; but vigorous love will make you both embrace, and seek for opportunities of converse with him, and the meditations of him sweet, *Psal.* 104. 34.

For the 2d, Even our external duties, should be performed as obedience to God: Therefore, 1. Take nothing in hand, but what is duty. 2. And present Duty, for God hath appointed a season for every Work, *Eccl.* 3. 4. 3. Do what is Duty, because it's Duty; because God requireth it: For a man may do that which upon the matter is Duty, and yet not to do it, because God requireth it; and then he cannot be said to serve God, there is need to advert to this, for it's a great mean of peace to a mans Conscience, when he knoweth that which he hath been employed in, was the very work God called him into; and therefore he engaged in it, and though it were a worldly concern, and did take a considerable time, and intent thoughts, yet he is not to think all this time was sinfully spent, because he was not on the meditations of God all that time, for God called him to be

about

about other things, which could not be performed without the thoughts of his mind. 4. Theſe external affairs ſhould be attended no longer than Duty requires: This alſo ſhould be conſidered, leſt love to the world keep your minds hanging upon them longer than need requireth, this becometh a ſnare, and a great obſtruction to Fellowſhip with God; you need fear nothing that God Commandeth, will of it ſelf marr your Spiritual good; for his Commands are, *For our good always*, *Deut.* 6. 24. But fear thy own miſmanagement, and weakneſs in making Duties to interfer, and juſtle out one another: Seek therefore to get thy heart inclined to perform his Statutes always, *Pſal.* 119. 112. Be always about ſeaſonable Duty, give no allowance to idlenes, and vain thoughts; for it's miſpending of time, and being out of all manner of Duty, that doth moſt procure theſe diſquieting reflections; for if thou be conſcientiouſly ſerving God, and working righteouſneſs, then thou ſhalt find peace and quietneſs, as *Iſa.* 32. 17. 'And the work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, 'and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs and aſſurance 'for ever; Yea, the Lord will meet with thee, when thou art performing works of righteouſneſs, *Iſa.* 64. 5. Thy acting of Juſtice, and performing Duties to men, ſhall not obſtruct thy Fellowſhip with God, for he meeteth with ſuch.

For the third Help which is frequent retiring to God in in Secret Worſhip, pray always *Luke* 18. 1. and 1 Theſſ. 5. 17. *Pray without ceaſing*, this requireth more than only a Praying diſpoſition, for a meer diſpoſition is not the acting of Prayer which is required, though I grant this diſpoſition is requited in the Command of Praying always; and if there be not a diſpoſition and willingneſs, Prayer will ſoon be but a burden, and if there be an inclination and diſpoſition, Prayer will be frequent where God giveth an opportunity, *David* not only Prayeth three times a day, *Pſal.* 55. 17. but prayeth ſeven times a day, *Pſal.* 119. 164. which appeareth to be ſtated ordinary times for Worſhip daily: there is great guilt on many for ſeldom praying, who have

times

times at will, and sometimes knows not how to spend it; they can tell you they weary, they think long, they know not what to fall about, how to put off time, they will go to such a place or such a company only to put off time, and yet very seldom retiring to secret *Prayer*: Have you no concerns with God? have ye all the Communion with him that ye desire? have ye nothing to ask of him? or nothing to praise him for? How just will it be with God to cut thee out of these Opportunities, either by sudden Death, or cast thee in such sickness and pain, that it shall be more than thou canst to bear thy affliction, and hopelessly wish for such full Opportunities of conversing with God, as formerly thou hadst, some of you have now your Chambers at Command, your meat and drink provided seasonably for you, and your worldly business not thronging you: Yet you will go any where rather than to God, frequent Retirements to God when sincere are a great part of this Communion with him, while we are on Earth, and prevent long forgetting of God, are a help to have our Conversation such as becometh those who are often to come before him, a great mean to keep the Conscience in ordinary awe of God, and to understand how it is between him and our souls, to obtain help for present Duty, or trials, and to be spiritually minded which is life and peace, and to make Christians savoury and profitable to one another as relishing the Company where they resort.

The 4*th* Help for this Communion with God in our walk, is frequent ejaculatory prayer: when there is not opportunity for retiring to worship, these may be very numerous, and are more numerous than can be well counted for on walking with God, who hath acquired a gracious habit of making his request known to God in every thing, *Phili. pian.* 4. 6. By this kind of prayer, a man may often mind God, without any Detriment or Prejudice to his other Concerns, the Motions of the Soul being swift, when *Jacob* is predicting the Lot of his Children, *Gen.* 49. 18. And speaking to them, there's no loss to his work by that pathetick

and pertinent Meditation ſuch as do all their Works in the Lord, cannot but frequently mind him. Pious *Nehemiah* 2. 4. When in the preſence of a great Monarch, hath his ſhort Prayer to the God of Heaven, there being no ſeaſon then for retiring and bowing his knee to his *Maker*; yet he will not manage his deſign without ſome application to God; no company could keep him from his God, on whom his dependance was, this Example might inſtruct in many things, for 1. *Nehemiah* had prayed before, for ſucceſs in the firſt *Chap.* And particularly that God would grant him mercy in the ſight of that man, *v.* 11. Yet now in the preſence of the King he prayeth again, many ſuch as we would be ready to think we have prayed for this already, what needeth more prayer, and there's no opportunity for prayer now, and ſo let it alone, but he will not utter his Requeſt till he pray again. 2. He was ſurpriſed with the King's unexpected demand *verſe* 4. 'For what doſt thou make Requeſt; when 'ever we are ſurpriſed, we ſhould go firſt to God, whatever 'company we are in. 3. He was in great fear, *chap.* 2. 2. 'Then I was very ſore afraid, and therefore betaketh him-'ſelf immediately to God as a preſent help and refuge, and if 'we would do ſo in our fears, it would much ſtrengthen our 'Communion with God. 4. That which he was concern'd 'in was of great Conſequence, and therefore beſought God 'to be concerned in it, neither ſhould we attempt any thing 'of moment without application to God, this would be ano-'ther help to prevent our forgetting of God. 5. Here was an Opportunity offered for doing good, and he muſt go to God for Direction, how to manage it, his deſign was now much ripened, when the King deſires to know his Requeſt, and leſt by his weakneſs he ſhould obſtruct the Good of others, he addreſſeth himſelf to God for Counſel, ſo ſhould we when ever, and whereſoever Occaſion Offereth to be uſeful in the World, this would be another help to keep us near God, many ſuch Occaſions offer which are ſinfully neglected, I ſay occaſions for being profitable, though not

in

in that manner, of *Nehemiah* 6. Here is a present Duty must be performed immediatly, *Nehemiah* must now speak, there was no deferring of his Answer, but he appeareth, self deemed not daring to trust his own understanding, and therefore must needs go to God with it, what shall I speak, he had been at this time an accomplished Courteour and Favourite, and admitted near the King's Person, yet he will not trust his parts or Elocution; but he will trust his God, here also is another profitable Example that when men are clearly called to speak, either before few or many, and have not time to premeditate, yet there ought to be a serious humble looking up to God for his assistance, whatever be mens station in the world, no doubt humility is a Mother of many Prayers, and if this Example were followed, how blessed a Help would it be for frequent remembring God, these are but a taste of the many Occasions we have for these short Ejaculatory Prayers, which will do hurt to no mans other Concerns in the World, but are a great Help to Communion with God.

CHAP. VI.

Pertinent Meditations in the time of Communicating.

The fifth Inference,

SEeing such Blessed and near Communion with Christ may be obtained at the Lords Table, then Communicants should prepare for entertaining Communion with him in the time of that Solemnity, after serious preparation great diligence is necessary, that this holie Ordinance be managed on our part in an acceptable manner, that we may find it a true Communion with Christ, suitable

to its name, and of all Communicants they have the moſt peculiar advantage, who are acquainted with Communion with God before they come to the Lord's Table; for except there be ſome admirable work of power and mercy, men will ſurely profane the Sacrament, who have their fellowship with Chriſt then to begin, not knowing how to receive Chriſt when they receive theſe ſacred ſigns, or how to feed upon him: I ſay without ſome great work of God's mercy, for we muſt ſtill leave place for ſoveraign power and mercy, who can not only confirm ſuch as have doubted of their fellowship with God; but even then give it a Being which had no Being before; and in one day or hour give both faith and fellowship with God; yet this is no warrant for any to preſume without endeavouring both faith and fellowship before they come to the Lords Table.

It ſhould alſo be remarked that many godly Perſons find themſelves at a great loſs when they come to the Lords table, by not knowing how to act their part diſtinctly in Communicating, and though they have made ſome Conſcience of Preparation before, yet complains they act but confuſedly in the very time of the ſolemn Action, which doth much obſtruct their Peace and Comfort, yea, though they dare not charge themſelves with Hypocriſie as to their deſires for Communion with Chriſt, or that they were altogether inconcern'd in partaking; yet not knowing what Meditations were moſt ſuitable in the time of partaking, and wandring from one thought to another without fixing on that which was moſt proper for the work, do often fall into impertinencies alien to the great work in hand, which being reflected upon, giveth ſuch a wound to their Conſcience, that the day or hour which ſhould have been the time of their great Joy, is turned into grief and complaints: And that which will appear ſtrange unto ſtrangers to theſe things, that ſome find more difficulty to be compoſed in their minds in the very time of that ſolemnity, than they found before they came to it; whereby they are ſurpriſed and fall into great

Conſternation

Consternation, that when the soul should have been most united, fixed, and elevated for Communion with Christ, that then their thoughts should be a gathering: though possibly the things they were thinking of were pious and good in themselves, but altogether unseasonable; Such would consider that feeding on Christ is so excellent and profitable for the soul, and so destructive for Satans Interest, that no Devices or Temptations will be wanting to frustrate that profite; and therefore should be guarded against, not only to resist Temptations in the time, or any thing impertinent to the Work in hand, but withal before we come to partake, this should have a peculiar Consideration, How we should act in the time of that Solemn action: and who knoweth but the neglect of this part of preparation may provock God to let us find our own weakness to our grief, if we be so proud as to think we can act the most Solemn part of the Work of our selves, without any preparation, therefore it will be found our Duty both to pray, and meditate before hand, how to be employed in the time of Receiving: And such are in a special manner concerned to notice this who have smarted already for its Neglect, complaining that God had deserted them, for no other Reason but because of their Impertinent wandring at the Lords table.

And for your help in this part of the work, how to act your part of this holy Communion, I shall propose, by the Lord's help, a few things to your Consideration, I say how to act, lest any should say there's no acting required of us but only receiving: but such would consider, that our Receiving of Christ is the acting of faith, as is clear from *John* 1. 12. Wherein also Love to our Blessed Redeemer must be acted, so that we must act our part in this holy Communion, if we expect the Benefit for which also we should be active in praises.

First, Then when we are to enter on this Blessed Duty, we should humbly request for the Lord's Assistance and Presence with us, that our hearts may be established by his

Grace, and keep close to the Work; this should be done were there never so many about you.

2. It's necessary also that what the Lord sendeth by his Messengers for clearing the Nature of the Sacrament be diligently hearkned unto; and I do the rather mind you of this, because some do then shut their ears from attending to any thing spoken, being wholly taken up with thoughts of their own: I am not yet speaking of the very instant of receiving, for at that time People must be exercised with their own Meditations, and I should not be diverted with many words, but that which I say, is that before the sacred action be engaged, some take a Liberty to neglect all they hear, attending only to their own secret thoughts and debates: but this is not the seasonable Work, for if it be Ministers duty to preach, and open up the Nature of the Sacrament, and teach the Dutie of Communicants, then it's the Peoples Duty to hearken, not knowing but the Lord will direct that unto them, which may either clear their present doubts, or set them on some more seasonable work than that wherewith they are at present exercised.

3. When ye are entering the Work labour to come to it cheerfully and thankfully, Blessing God you have so blessed a Work to go to, as actual solemn Communion with Christ, and that the Lore himself hath brought you into the banqueting-house, *Canticles* 2. 4. 'He brought me to the banqueting-house.' This is Comfortable when a Communicant is so far cleared, that the Lord hath brought him there, begin it with hope of a Comfortable meeting with Christ; It's a Feast of Love wherein thou a Believer and Lover of him mayest find his Banner of Love spread over thee, and himself a Covert from the tempest of all Temptations that may assault thee.

4. When thou art to partake that thy Meditations may be pertinent and suitable to this holy action, labour to have thy thoughts

thoughts agreeable to the Inſtitution it ſelf, conſidering the Elements, and what they repreſent, and pondering the very words of the Inſtitution, becauſe theſe words of Chriſt's Inſtitution point out thy preſent work, and what ſhould be the nature of thy Meditations; nor canſt thou partake aright if thy mind be not exerciſed with what Chriſt ſpeaketh in that action, beſides that, this will be by the bleſsing of God an hedge in the way, to keep thee from impertinent excurſions, and unſeaſonable thoughts, but no hedge to the breathings of God's Spirit or Limiting of him, for thou art to expect moſt of the Spirits help when thou art cloſs at thy Duty, and this is the preſent Duty to meditate on the words of Chriſt ſpoken by him at the Celebration of this Ordinance, and to be ſuitably affected with them.

5. And more particularly when thou ſeeſt the bread broken, and readeſt or heareſt that word, 'this is my Body 'which is broken, then thou art to meditate on Chriſt crucified, his bleſſed broken Body, and bleeding wounds; and ſo to behold him as in exquiſite pain, crying out of being forſaken, mocked, and tempted by the wicked to come out of that pain, and relinquish the Work, *Mat.* 27. 48. 'If thou 'thou be the Son of God, come down from the croſs. Thus we are to behold him, and mourn for the deep hand we had in all his ſufferings, we having pierced him, are obliged to Look and mourn, and this mourning with admiration of that love that provided ſo coſtly a Remedy for us, and leaning to him who made his ſoul an offering for ſin is a part of our acting this bleſſed Communion with Chriſt.

6. When thou heardſt that bleſſed word (take) and that by taking the Bread, thou art to take Chriſt himſelf: Here thou art to meditate on the great Offer made to thee, and to believe in thine heart that now the Redeemer and Saviour of the world offereth himſelf to thee, and requireth thee to take him; as he gave himſelf for thee, ſo now he giveth himſelf unto thee: This giving, and

thy

thy receiving is the very acting of this bleſſed Communion, he giveth himſelf to be thine for ever, and ſo thou receives; he gives himſelf intirely with all his purchaſe, and ſo thou by Faith receives, thou comeſt with the ſenſe of thy ſin and guilt, and he giveth the benefit of his Blood to cleanſe thee from all ſin; thou comeſt with the ſenſe of thy Diſeaſes and thy ſins often prevailing againſt thee, and out of his fulneſs thou receiveſt Grace, by receiving him thou haſt a Right to all the Bleſsings purchaſed as thy need requires here, and a Right to Glory, which in due time thou ſhalt poſſeſs, ſetting thee down together with him in heavenly places, *Eph.* 2. 6. O bleſſed Communion begun here on Earth, and ſhortly to be perfected in that Eternal Communion where there ſhall be no more paining diſtance.

7. When thou heareſt that word (eat) and thereby Chriſt ſaying take me into thy heart, eat, and be ſatisfied, now fill thy hungry ſoul, eat abundantly, make Room, open for me, *I will come in and ſup with thee*, and the meat ſhall be my fleſh, Meat indeed: What a pain is it ſometimes to a Believer that he cannot duely value this love, even when he valueth it moſt; and therefore will Eat and Wonder, and Wonder and Eat, but dare not for all his Wondering ſay Lord it's too good for me, I dare not touch or eat it, no no, ſaith the Believer my life is in it, I cannot want it, let his Gifts be like himſelf, though I be ſtill like my ſelf meer nought: I find him ſaying, If I eat not his fleſh, I have no life in me, *John* 6. 53. Therefore I will choice life and eat; and whatever may be ſaid of eating of Chriſt's fleſh when a Man believeth, yet I will eat in this manner, becauſe he requireth it, he hath opened my heart and prepared his place in my ſoul, O let him come and poſſeſs his own Conqueſt, and ſince he alloweth to take and eat, I will do it, I will take him into my very heart, that I may Live, and Live to him for ever, and I do requeſt him to take deep Poſſeſſion of all the powers of my Soul by the Graces of his

his Spirit, and animate them all for his Service, as meat is diffused through the Body, for its service. Here is intimate Communion with Christ in his Ordinance.

8. When that overcoming word is heard (for you) broken for you; Christ himself making Application of the great Sacrifice to thee, as this goeth deepest into the heart, so it raiseth the greatest Admiration that it was for me even for me, who was not only worthless, but a Rebel and dishonourer of Him; this cutteth through the heart, giving it a deep Loves wound, was I then in his thoughts and upon his heart? and did He thus Suffer for me who acted against Him for so many years? and resisted as I could His Love, when pursued by it? what shall I now render to the Lord, what can I render, what have I to render, but what is His own? and that same I often keep back, how good is it that by what I now receive I shall be qualified to Extoll His love in another manner, and in a better place, though my Praises cannot through Eternity recompense His Love, for He is above our Blessing and praise, only I shall take pleasure to Sound out His Praises before Angels and men, when I am taught the Song of the *Lamb*; I am this day deep Debitour to *His* Love, and shall be so for ever, I shall Glory in it, and spend, but cannot out spend Eternity in acknowledgeing this Debt, that His Precious Body was Broken for me, and Himself allowing me now to Believe it: This is also a part of the Believers Communion with Christ at His Table.

9. When thou hearest these words, *This do in Remembrance of me.* Consider who Requireth this, is it not He who Remembred me in my Low Estate, wallowing in my Blood, and no eye to pity me but His, Remembring me when I was not Remembring my *Self*, nor come to my self to consider my forlorn estate, when my wretched self, and all the World about me, would let me Sink into the Pit whence there is no Redemption, no man caring

for

for my Soul, is not this He who Remembreth me ſtill? Hath He not mercifully Remembred me this day in bringing me here where I find the Bread of Life? Hath He not now made me taſte of that Tree of Life which ſhall be food for ever? and all by His Gracious Remembring of me, and ſhall I not Remember His Love more than Wine, no thanks to me, O Lord to Remember Thee, and thy Love, hadſt thou required me to paſs through ſome flames of a Hell, it were my part to eſſay it at thy Command, how much more when I have nothing but Love to Remember, ſhall not I Remember thy unquenchable Love, who haſt reſcued me from unquenchable Flames; I have many times Wretchedly done what I could to quench thy Love, but many Waters hath not done it, I do remember it Lord, and through thy Grace will Remember it, and I will do this which thou now Requireſt in Remembrance of Thee and Thy Love, giving Thee thanks for Commanding it, and had I nothing elſe to do in this Ordinance, yet by Thy grace Thy gracious Command ſhall be Anſwered, though in great weakneſs. Here alſo is another part of this Bleſſed Communion, Chriſt requiring remembrance, and the Believer cordially yielding it.

10. And when thou heareſt of the ſhewing forth of His Death, which Chriſt is not aſhamed of, but will have it in this manner Publiſhed; then ſaith the Believer, that Death brought Life to my Soul, that Death hath overcome Death for me, that now I may ſay O Death where is thy Sting, by this Death is the Death of Deaths, *Hoſ.* 13. 14. O Death I will be thy plague, *and* 1 *Cor.* 15. 54. Death is ſwallowed up in victory. Death was long my terrour, and kept me in Bondage, not knowing what hour the firſt and the ſecond Death might ſurprize me together, now when I muſt go through that Paſſage I hope to fear no evil, Chriſt hath Sweetned the Paſſage, made it no Enemy, but a neceſſary ſtep for putting off Corruption, that I may be Cloathed with incorruption, there ſhall be no Prints of Sin or Death

ſeen

ſeen upon me, no ſpot or wrinkle by the thrugs of Death. I ſhall take no ſtench of Death with me where I go, and all this by His Death who was Slain and is Alive: I will this day apply it thankfully, and Solemnly ſhew it *Forth*: Chriſt Crucified being my Glory, and He who bringth me to Glory; deſiring in my Soul that His Death were ſhewed *Forth*, from the Riſing to the Setting of the Sun. Here alſo is a part of this Bleſſed Communion, Chriſt Requiring His Death to be ſhew'd *Forth*, and the Believer cordially performing it.

11. When the Believer heareth that the Cup is the New Teſtament in His Blood: Conſidering that by the Death of the Teſtator, the Teſtament is of Force, *Heb.* 9: 16, 17. The Believer Intereſted in the Legacy, may now with Confidence expect what is bequathed, for the Teſtament thus Confirmed cannot be Diſanulled, *Gal.* 3. 15. Then ſaith the Believer, I will give Credit to the Tokens and Pledges deviſed by Himſelf for my Confirmation; He requireth me to take them as ſuch & ſo I receive them from Him who is Faithful. I will from henceforth expect all the Promiſed Bleſſings that I ſtand in need of, for in this Covenant or Teſtament is all my *Salvation*; Chriſt hath made all ſure by His Death, and now He hath made all ſure to me by His Seal: I dare not diſtruſt His Seal or Pledges, He hath made me a Believer, He hath this day given me to believe in Chriſt Crucified, I have Received Him according to his Offer, he hath given me power to become one of the Children of God, the Teſtament therefore is for me, and its Seal ſealeth me unto the day of Redemption, and here is a comfortable part of this Communion with Chriſt, he giveth the Pledges and Seal of His Teſtament, and the Believer joyfully receiving them as ſuch, and Rendering him Praiſe; the Believer reſolving now to go to Death in humble confidence, *That the Lord hath made an everlaſting Covenant with him, ordered in all things, and ſure.*

Theſe

These are but a taste of the seasonable Meditations in the time of Partaking, and a Help for preventing Impertinent wandrings of the Mind; and though a Communicant reach not all such particular meditations at one time, yet one or moe suitable serious Meditations on Christ's words of institution, will be found by the Blessing of God a mean to keep the Soul at that work, which God then Requireth, and so prevent the wounding Reflections of many after they have Communicated: for it must be supposed that every Godly Communicant will review the way how his Soul was Imployed at the Lord's Table, and if he find that his Meditations were not apposit to the work, it cannot but make a very bitter Reflection.

Know also that these Meditations already hinted, are but for puting some weak People in mind to keep close by the Institution, lest their thoughts go off their Work; but no ways intended as any Restriction or Limiting of Communicants (except from wandring) for if Christ manifest Himself and entertain thee with his Loves, thou will not need such helps, for *He* can soon Elevate thy Soul into such Meditations, affections and joy, by the Breathings of His Spirit, as thy self cannot Express, and all of them suitable to the Blessed work thou art about.

CHAP. VII.

Believers should desire to Partake of this Communion.

The sixth Inference,

THis Blessed Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood, then Believers are obliged to have a sincere and an earnest desire to partake of so great a Mercy.

And that we should desire this great Benefit, Consider,

First, The Lord Commandeth it, and therefore we should

have

have a desire and a delight to do his will, we may not chuse or refuse as our inclination leadeth, which appeareth to be the Errour of many, not considering that the Lord will call to an account what Regard is testified to so Gracious a Command: which is to be Lamented that so many make their Humours their Rule, they have not a mind to it, it's not their present desire and so lay it aside: forgetting that it should be their desire, because of Christ's Merciful Command.

2. Because it's a Feast of pure Love on Christ's part, therefore it should be desired: it was His Love that laid its Foundation in lying down His Life. 2. It's His Love to appoint such a Memorial of it. 3. His Love and the Tokens of it then to be Communicated to Believers in a special manner: Can there be Love where there is no desire to meet with Love and entertain it? Consider what is to be your Feast, *the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the World*, if this be believed in heart, how can ye but hunger and desire to eat? for such Food will not be always in your Offer; give praise that ever ye had the Offer of that which will make you praise for ever, and be satisfying to thy Soul when all other things fail thee, *Psal.* 22. 26. 'The meek shall eat and be 'satisfied: Can ye with peace keep your selves out of the way, where such an Offer is made? Know ye not that the Receiving of Christ is your begun Eternal happiness? which neither Death nor any thing else shall deprive you of? If thou say thou hast received him already in another manner, and dost hope to be blessed in him for ever, though thou never Receive him at the Lords Table. I would Answer that thou art the more Ingrate, who doest not desire to Receive Him afresh in the manner He hath appointed: Art thou wearie of Receiving Him? didst thou get such a fill of Him before that thou desirest to Receive him no more? this is ground sufficient to make thee suspect thou didst never yet Receive Him, if thou be wearied of it, for thy heart should be still open to Christ.

3. Is

3. Is it not Communion with Christ thou art dayly Praying for? and if thou prayest in sincerity, then it should Elevate thy heart to hear of His appointments for obtaining it; when he saith in such an Ordinance I am to be present in a peculiar manner, allowing you a most intimate fellowship, as near as you can expect in this Life; there thou mayest expect the return of thy Prayers; and if thou hast no regard to it thou rendrest thy self and Prayers suspicable of meer Hypocrisie, wilt thou not be ashamed to call thy self a praying Christian for fellowship with Christ and yet have no desire to be there where thou mayest meet Him and have Him? Dost thou not often say, 'O that I knew where I 'might find him! *Job* 23. 3. He answereth in this Ordinance I will be present, giving my Self and my Loves: if thou regard not this, and yet has no desire to be where He is, what can thy self judge of thy Prayers but as words of course, and flattering God with thy lips? beware of bewraying thy estrangement to Christ as one that has never seen Him, in any part of His Beauty, lest thou be of these who say, as *Isaiah* 53. 2. 'There is no beauty that we should desire him.

4. The Love we owe to the Glory of our Blessed Redeemer obligeth to this desire, of shewing it forth in the manner He hath appointed: yet on this account also many are Guilty by the neglect of this Ordinance; for these Dangerous mistakes are too much rooted in many, thinking because they receive Christ at any time when they Believe, therefore they need not be solicitous for Receiving Him at His Table; and because they may Render Him Glory at other times for His Love in Dying, therefore they need not go to the Lords Supper to perform it: but these thoughts involve you in great Guilt, for however frequent thy Praises be at other times, why would thou presume to be wiser than thy Lord? who hath appointed this Publick Solemn manner of performing it? Darest thou say in His face Lord I think this way of shewing forth thy Death needless, I think a more privat way

may

may ſerve? wilt thou Impudently advance thy own Wiſdom as above His? Whether doth He or thou know beſt which way He is to be Glorified, whether art thou to give Him Rules or to be Ruled by Him? If thou wilt be ſo arrogant as to plead that thou knoweſt better how to do thy Duty, than he can teach thee; it's no wonder thou have no deſire for the Lord's Supper; but rather if thou canſt regard any Goſpel Ordinance, ſince thou art wiſe enough to teach thy Self: Think with thy ſelf, I muſt once compear before my Judge, the ſame bleſſed Redeemer who requires his death to be ſhewed forth, what ſhall I anſwer, when thus charged by him; the juſt died for the unjuſt, I ſubmitted to agony in my ſoul, and torments in my body, to relieve poor ſinners from eternal Torments; thus my Death was the Reconciliation of the whole Elect World, who thereby now ſtand upright in Judgement; I required, that this my Death ſhould be ſhewed forth unto this day, that I am come again: But here is a man that thought it not neceſſary, to render me that publick honour. What can be thy anſwer, but ſpeechleſs conſternation? Think alſo with thy ſelf, if I expect Reconciliation with God by that precious Death, how can I refuſe, Nay, ſhould I not rejoyce to publish that love eſpecially in ſo comfortable a manner, as in Communion with Chriſt, and his Saints on earth; and contribute my mite to keep its Memory freſh and fragrant in the World: It's great ingratitude to have no longings for this Ordinance; yet it appears, that if ſome were placed in ſuch circumſtances, as no occaſion offered, it would be no great grief of heart to them: or if occaſion offer, but it may be at ſome diſtance, occaſioning bodily trouble in attending, they can eaſily forego it; though perhaps performing longer journeys at the ſame time to other places: or if opportunity offer in the place of their reſidence, yet it cometh undeſired; and a very triffle ſhall detain ſome from partaking and all this, becauſe there is no love and deſire after it. I ſpeak not this of all, but it's ſhameful to

in any professing Christian, and to much the more, because our blessed Redeemer testified so great regard to this Ordinance, that when he was immediatly to engage his deepest sufferings; yet even then he would have this Feast of Love celebrated, and fixed for after generations. Shall our Saviour testifie so great desire for our good, and we have no desire to receive it? Shall we so undervalue that Love, which can neither be overvalued, nor duely valued? *Luk.* 22. 15. 'And he said unto them, with desire have I desired to eat this 'passeover with you before I suffer: Appointing this communion of his Body and Blood to continue until he come again.

5*ly*, If thou be a Christian indeed, then thou art duely praying for grace to strengthen thee for the duties thou must perform, for strength against thy secret or open sins, for strength against Temptations, from thy own heart, or from Satan and his Instruments, for strength to bear thy Afflictions, and grace to carry Christianly under thy trials; therefore thou should desire to be there, where he is to be received, who shall be the strength of thy heart: Art thou not often fainting, both in thy Duty and Trials? Then believe in thine heart, that Christ is that true bread of Life, *Joh.* 6. 48 Hereby thou shall be strengthned for Duties far above thy own strength, hereby thou shalt be enabled to cut thy way through the greatest difficulties; Thy Redeemer is thy strength, *Psal.* 19. 14. Thou art to receive that which will make thee a lively Christian, for the honour of thy Lord refusing nothing he commandeth, and sinking under no burden he layeth on thy back: Great is the mercy to believe this strength, and great is the loss of our Souls, when that strength is but thought upon, as an uncertain may be. Remember Christian, and believe in thine heart, what Christ saith, *Joh.* 6. 56. 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh 'my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him: If thou dost believingly receive at his Table, doubt not thy strength, Christ dwelleth in thee; and what have ye to desire dwelling Christ? And that thou mayest desire

be

be ſure to believe his words, thou ſhalt dwell in him: how deſireable is it to have him ſo near, and how encouraging againſt all manner of aſſaults, when we can ſay as 1 *John* 4. 4. 'Greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the World.

Sixthly, By ſincere Communicating, ye may warrantably expect to be confirmed Chriſtians, by the ſeal of God for a bleſſed Eternity: and therefore the deſire of the ſoul ſhould be to partake of this bleſſed Communion. For this Ordinance is deſigned for ſecuring Believers of a title to all the benefits of the new Covenant; for which cauſe theſe pledges are given by Chriſt: have ye pondered the greatneſs of that mercy, to have a Charter for Heaven ratified with God's own ſeal? And that thou ſhalt be preſerved unto that Heavenly Kingdom: Is not thy poor ſoul many times ready to faint, by reaſon of thy doubts, that thou has no intereſt in God's ſpecial Favour, that thou never received the mercies of his Choſen, that though thou haſt received many mercies, yet thou knoweſt not but an Hypocrite may have all that ſort of mercies conferred on thee? art thou not ſometimes afraid that if Death ſhould now ſeize thee, thou may'ſt have no better than the Hypocrites portion? would not ſome ſolid perſwaſion of God's love be a great relief to thy poor Soul, to know that Chriſt is come to dwell in thee, from whoſe love thou ſhalt never be ſeparate? Who ſhall make thee live, becauſe he lives: then conſider what Chriſt the truth ſaith, *Joh.* 6. 15. 'I am the living bread which came down from heaven, 'If any man eat of this bread, he ſhall live for ever.' He well knoweth, that our eternity is our great concern, and therefore taketh pains to ſecure thoſe who depend on him, that if they receive him, they ſhall have no cauſe of fear, he is ſo deeply concerned with the Believers certainty and comfort of his eternal well-being, that in this 6. of *John*, he poureth our Arguments to ſecure it, *ver.* 50. 'this is the bread which cometh 'down from heaven. That a man may eat thereof, and not die, and *ver.* 51. 'If any man eat of this bread, he ſhall live 'for ever, and continueth to inculcat the certainty thereof, to

verse 59. Trust then what he saith; that if thou eat of this bread of Life at his table, which the believing Partaker doth, then thou shalt not die, but live for ever. This should raise thy desires for this enriching Ordinance, that thy doubting may be turned into rejoycing in God thy Saviour.

I might add here, that our desire for this holy Communion should be so sincere and strong, that Believers should endeavour frequent Communicating: But having occasion elsewhere to speak a little of frequency in partaking; I shall now only put you in mind: that some celebrating this Sacrament much more frequently than others, should both be charitable one to another; Where neither precipitancy can be charged on the one side, nor sinful negligence on the other: There is no doubt, but many Godly Ministers celebrate the Lords supper very frequently by principles of conscience, and love to that duty; and should not be otherwise judged of by these who celebrate more seldom. And other godly Ministers cannot have this Ordinance so frequently celebrated; who by their principles judge it necessary, to examine most of the Communicants before celebration, that they may the better know the state of their flocks, which requireth a considerable portion of time for its performance; there's no cause of stumbling on either hand, when it's known that in both wayes there is a conscientious and affectionat regard to that great ordinance of Christ: the scripture mentioning often, but not how often; yet because it mentioneth often, and because of the love we should have to frequent fellowship with Christ, in that way of his own appointment: frequency should be endeavoured; And if people cannot frequently partake in the place of their Residence, other Opportunities should be improved, as God giveth Occasion in his providence, which is now frequently offered, and embraced also by the most serious.

It may not be improper in this place, to enquire why some that profess a desire to partake of the Lords supper nevertheless may be warrantably debarred.

Answ. 1. The desire of partaking simply of it self cannot qualifie a person for the Lord's Supper, except this desire be

qualified

qualified by a right principle, for a good end, and due preparation endeavoured; otherwise a profane Ruffian, Apostate, or Atheist, might pretend a desire, and so be admitted; if a professed desire were a sufficient qualification, and so that holy Ordinance profaned.

2*ly*, These who are appointed Stewards of the Mysteries of God are required to be faithful, 1 *Cor.* 4. 2. For they must give an account to their Master, and therefore cannot dispose of what is his, but by his own direction.

3*ly*, His express direction is, *Matth.* 7. 6. 'Give not that 'which is holy unto dogs: and therefore the Gospel Priviledges, wherewith they are entrusted, must be dispensed only to those who have a right to them: As none were to partake of the Passover, but such as were clean and sanctified, 2 *Chron.* 30. 17. *Jer.* 15. 19. 'If thou take forth the pre-'cious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth.

4*ly*, Seeing these holy Mysteries are to be administred to those only who have a right to them, then the stewards without presuming on Gods prerogative to know the hearts of men, and who have a right in Gods sight; they are to dispense these mysteries, according to ordinary rules given them by their Master, and recorded in the holy Scriptures: wherein we find some actually deprived of the priviledges of others, and cast out from the Communion of Believers, 1 *Cor.* 5. 4. and 5. verse. and verse 13. 'Put away from among your selves that wicked person.

5*ly*, When men are thus deprived of these benefits according to the Rules of Gods Word; subjection and obedience should be yielded unto those who are set over them in the Lord, *Heb.* 13. 17. 'Obey them that have the rule over you, 'and submit your selves, for they watch for your souls, as 'they that must give account.

6*ly*, When it's apparent, that some who press to be at the Lords Table, have no knowledge of the Covenant of Grace, unto which the Lords Supper is a Seal, nor any competent measure of the knowledge of Christ himself, nor how to discern the Lords Body, or *Secondly*, Are so obstinate, that they

will subject to no trial, whereby Ministers may know to whom they administer that holy Ordinance, such as will give no account of their soundness in the Faith, nor declare a consent to receive Christ as Redeemer and Lord, or *Thirdly*, are of such ungodly conversation, that they testifie themselves to be strangers to Christ, and the power of his Grace: these persons while they continue such, could not but profane the Lord's Supper, and therefore should consider that they deprive themselves of that Benefit: for Ministers must not transgress the Laws of Christ to humor men, nor must they be Partakers of other mens sins, who would precipitate themselves into that heinous guilt of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

Seventhly; And these who are thus debarred, should not take this Censure, as if they were totally rejected, but rather for their present good, to prevent the guilt of eating and drinking unworthily: and for the time to come should pray and endeavour to be qualified for partaking with others in that holy Ordinance.

CHAP. VIII.

Believers should come to the Lords Supper with Faith and Expectation.

The seventh Inference,

THis holy Ordinance being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood; then Believers should approach it with faith and expectation of this blessed Communion.

And that the Believer is obliged to this faith and expectation, Consider,

First, That Believers must render unto Christ, the honour due to his faithfulness, since he maketh an offer of himself, saying, take eat; then we are to believe in our hearts he will be present making good his offer to the believing Receiver: otherwise

otherwiſe we diſhonour him, as if what he ſaith and offereth were not to be truſted: which would run us unto deep guilt, beſides, that it would render the whole tranſaction on our part, Faithleſs, void, and unprofitable; this therefore ſhould be carefully adverted, tha there be no ſuſpicion of the truth of Chriſt's offer; or his faithfulneſs; leſt we profane that holy Name, who will not ſuffer his faithfulneſs to fail, *Pſal.* 89. 33. This his honour ſhould be moſt dear to thee, who was ſo dear to him, as to make his ſoul an offering for thy ſin, and now offereth himſelf to be thine; Come therefore believingly to the Lord's Table, truſting him who is truth it ſelf, *John* 14. 6.

Secondly, The whole of this holy work muſt be managed by faith; for we have no other way of ſeeing him, with whom we are to have Communion, but by faith, though now we ſee him not, yet we believe, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. Faith is now our eye to behold him: ye go to the Lord's ſupper in faith of a Divine Inſtitution, ye go to it, believe its your duty by Chriſt's Command, ye go to it, believing he was ſlain, and is alive, ye go to it, believing he hath provided a way for intereſt in his Body & Blood, & are to go to it actually believing in him for your perſonal partaking of this Communion, ſo that faith is required in all the parts of it, and grounds laid down for the Believers comfortable Expectation.

Thirdly, Come to it with Expectation, for herein thou art about thy lord and maſter's ſervice, which he requireth: thou needeſt not fear it to be ſaid, who hath required this at thine hand, for himſelf hath required it, and there's ſtill good to be expected in doing of his will, *Rev.* 22. 14. Your labour ſhall not be in vain, for ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt, *Col.* 3. 24. Bleſſed are all his attendants whoſe care is to ſerve him, for Chriſt ſaith, 'Where I am there ſhall alſo my ſervant be, *John* 12. 26. Thou mayeſt expect he will be with thee at his Table, who art his Servant in ſincerity.

Fourthly, Come in faith, and hope; for the promiſe is to him that believeth, *Gal.* 3. 22. Believing is the only ſure way for

this blessed fellowship, and your seeing the glory of God in his power and mercy toward you; Consider your need of the Lords appearing for your good, and do not obstruct your mercy by misbelief, remember what is said, *Matth.* 13. 58. 'And he did not many mighty works there, because of their 'unbelief: If he shall say, according to thy faith, so be it unto thee, and thou hast no faith, then blame thy self if no mighty works be done for thee; for he will not humour thy misbelief: Labour then not only to have some actings of faith, but being strong in it giving glory to God, devise liberally of thy God, seek that he will deal bountifully with thee, and remember what is said, *Matth.* 15. 28. 'O 'woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee, even as thou wilt.

5*ly*, If thou comest not to this Ordinance with expectation; thou wilt be ready to think the matter is not great, whether thou partake or not, for thou expectest no great benefit by it, and so any trivial excuse will prevail to let it alone: for our natural corruption is so strong, and our grace commonly so weak, that pure duty of it self doth not alwayes engage us without some prospect of advantage, but when our own good appeareth in the work, then we have an argument from our own souls to resist Obstructions standing in the way of this profit: and if thou should go foreward, & partake; yet thy expectations being languide, thy seriousnes will too readily be proportioned to thy hope, and languid also: but remember that proclamed gracious name, *Exod.* 34. 6 Is in a peculiar manner recorded in this ordinance, and having recorded his name, he will come and bless his people, *Exod.* 20. 24.

6*ly*, Endeavour to approach the Lords Table with expectation of good, that ye may be able to encourage others to the same duty; many of you will have the occasion to see and speak with one another before ye partake, and out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth will be speaking, for which cause ye should observe where there is need of strengthning the hands of weak and doubting persons, and purposely let something fall which may be gathered by others for their encouragement: as in thy own family, when thou art consi-

dering

dering who of thy Children or ſervants may be moſt ripened for that holy ordinance, who had never yet the Confidence to preſume it; yet drop words of encouragement, by ſhewing the excellent things to be there obtained, the happineſs of thoſe who indeed receive Chriſt, the dignity and mercy of being ſolemnly engaged to Chriſt, the comfort of having a pledge of his love, the mercy of being admitted unto ſuch near Communion with him: thus a word may be bleſſed for engaging others in that duty, which may be their bleſſing for ever. Whereas on the other hand, if thy mouth be filled with complaints, and others hear thee ſaying thou haſt no great benefit by Communions, thou queſtions whether thou will go to the Lords Table or not, eſpecially if thou be a perſon noted for Religion; theſe who hear ſuch Diſcourſe being weak, will be tempted to think; what a fool am I to take in any thoughts of Communicating, when ſuch an Eminent Chriſtian ſpeaketh ſo meanly of it, as if little or no profit were to be had. I will give it over: and thus ſome poor tender ſmoaking Flax, may be quenched by your means; and if compaſsionate Jeſus be tender of them, (as no doubt he will) yet no thanks to you, who are guilty by caſting water on their little coal, which could have quench't it, if a better friend had not kept it in life.

It may not be amiſs to conſider in this place, what may be the reaſons that ſo few profeſsing Chriſtians go to the Lords Supper with this neceſſary believing expectation: ſeeing it's diſhonourable to our bleſſed Redeemer, obſtructeth our own good, and is often found prejudicial to others.

An. Firſt, it will be found that the ſeeds of Atheiſm, and unbelief of God's word and promiſe, hath a deep hand in this wo. Ah! few Chriſtians by profeſsion are eſtabliſhed in the truth; men do not & will not lay this to heart, tho' they often hear it, and I fear are diſguſted, becauſe they ſo often hear it: proud nature taking it heavily to be charged with unfixedneſs in the faith; and theſe diſreliſhing ſuch warnings moſt, who have moſt need of them. I wish the Reader concerned in

this,

this, retire to his own Conscience and put the question closly home: Do I firmly believe the history of Christ's passion? & that salvation is by no other name? I speak not now of mens perswasion, that Christ hath loved them, and washed them in his own Blood; but mens perswasion that he was dead, and is alive. If ye will not try your unfixedness in fundamental truths in season, you may soon come to know your misbelief by experience, to your grief in an hour of temptation, or at the hour of Death: try therefore in time what ye believe, and on what grounds; seek to be fixed in the faith of Christ and his truth, otherways your expectations will still be faint. Nor do I speak here of such perswasion and fixedness in the truth, as is inconsistent with any degree of doubting: for here we know but in part, but that which I speak is against that dangerous unfixedness, that hath no degree of perswasion, under which too many are perishing.

Secondly, But some others are not so much discouraged by misbelief of this Nature, as by their fears that Christ will have no regard to them, that he will never honour them with such Communion with himself: Others they grant may have it, but for themselves, they look for nothing but a dry Fleece, when others are wet, they have deserved no better, and expect no better.

Ans. If our mercies be dispensed according to deserving, then we may all stop together, and proceed no further, but blessed be God, that our expectations depend on free grace. I will freely love them, *Hosea* 14 4. 2. Hath he not regarded thee already, in opening thine eyes to see thy wretchedness, which thou didst not see before? Doth he not discover Diseases in order to a remedy? If he had no regard to thee, he could have suffered thee to run on in presumption, and sit down at his Table, without ever minding a wedding-garment, and made thy rising thy terrour; but now he preventeth it, by making thee Consider what thou art about. Therefore 3. If thou would be regarded at his table and accepted, know that a garment of salvation will cover all thy spots:

ſpots: give praiſe that this Garment is ready for the putting on, give praiſe that it's not only provided for the putting it on, but himſelf putteth it on: *Iſa.* 61. 10. 'He hath cloathed 'me with the garments of ſalvation. Give praiſe that ever any poor ſinners were ſecured of theſe garments, and render praiſe that there is a minut of time left thee to beg theſe garments, that fine Linnen of the Saints, under which covering thou canſt not be deſpiſed, nor thy holy Expectation diſappointed.

Thirdly, Others faint in their expectations; becauſe tho' they have been often at the Lord's Table, yet they never get great profit. *Anſ.* and whoſe fault was this? If thy misbelief depriv'd thee of the communications of grace, where wilt thou leave thy complaint? For he warned thee, that mighty works wer not to be expected wher unbelief had the dominion; thou mayeſt go to a hundred communions and never be the better, if thou doſt not believe nor draw out of the Wells of ſalvation: therefore if thou haſt a ſincere value for Communion with Chriſt, if thou would not always carry away a bad report of that enriching Ordinance, if thou would'ſt prevent a contempt of it in thy own ſoul: conſider ſeriouſly what hath been thy manner of Communicating formerly; ſee thy way wherein thy particular defects have been; thy neglect of preparation; thy hypocriſie; thy lukewarmneſs in the whole of the work; and thy misbelief at the work: repent of theſe evils, that thou mayeſt not ſay thou had a hard Maſter, but an hard heart.

Fourthly, Others are diſcouraged in their expectations, becauſe they obſerve not others who frequent Communions, much bettered in their converſations.

This I grant is for a lamentation, that ſo few appear like communion with Chriſt: yet it is not ſo with all, and tho' they were but few, as *Iſa.* 17 6. 'a few berries in the utmoſt 'fruitful branches. It's God's great mercy, when ſome are preſerved as Witneſſes againſt a declining generation, who not only are made ſuitable to a publick ſolemn Communion; but ſuch as rarely, any thing can be diſcovered in their practice, that is not conſiſtent with preſent fellowſhip with God, tho

poſſibly

poſſibly ye diſcern it not, as being ignorant of walking with God your ſelves. 2. If this be thy regrate, that that thou ſeeſt ſo few fruitful Chriſtians after Communions, then labour to add one to the number of theſe few, leſt others be diſcouraged by thy practice alſo. Thirdly, However it be as to partakers, tho' many prove very unfruitful; yet this is never occaſioned by want of proviſion, being allowed to eat and drink abundantly, and the hungry are filled with good things; and many have found their ſouls made as a watered Garden in attending this holy Ordinance. O that we were ſtirring up our ſelves, and ſtirring up one another, to pray down ſuch ſhowers of Bleſſings, as hath been found at Communions in the days of old.

CHAP. IX.

Objections of doubting Chriſtians anſwered.

The eighth Inference.

THe eighth Inference from the words, is, That ſeing ſo great a benefit as the Communion of Chriſts Body and Blood, may be had in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: then Chriſtians are obliged to endeavour the removal of all Objections, and ſtumbling Blocks, that ſtand in the way to obſtruct their partaking of this Benefit.

Before the particular Objections be mentioned, I ſhal premit theſe few things.

Firſt, That all profeſſed Chriſtians ſhould make conſcience, not to pretend Scruples and Objections where there is none; for where the Conſcience is not really burdened with ſome difficulty, it's but hydocriſie to frame Objections againſt peoples partaking of the Lord's Supper, that they may appear more ſerious than others: the heart of man is ſo deſperatly wicked and deceitful, that ſome have need of this Caution.

2*dly*,

2*dly*. Yet on the other hand, when ſome are exhorted to prepare for the Lords Supper, eſpecially young people who did never partake before: if fears and doubts ariſe in their hearts, whereby they ſtand in need of counſel and help of the more experienced; they ſhould not deprive themſelves of that help, fearing they may be thought Hypocrits, or get a name of more ſeriouſneſs than they deſerve: as ſome have kept up their doubts from all others, until their doubts were too ſtrong for them, and brought them under ſuch diſtreſs, that it had been much their advantage to have revealed them ſooner.

3*dly*, Where ſtumbling Blocks are ſuch as may be removed with a little pains, or ſome more humility; all ſhould make conſcience of getting them removed: As for inſtance, if there be variance betwixt perſons, where a little true humility would cure all, in confeſſing of wrongs and injuries done to others, or forgiving injuries: then men ſhould go to the utmoſt againſt their own pride, and ſubmit to one another, rather than to deprive themſelves of ſo bleſſed a communion with Chriſt. *Eph*. 5. 21. 'Submitting your ſelves one 'to another, in the fear of God.

4*thly*. Where Objections are really ſerious and of weight, yet Chriſtians ſhould take care not to indulge them by heaping up of Scruples, and in the mean time, ſhutting their ears againſt any ſolution or mean of clearing their Doubts; they ſhould not conclude, that ſuch Objections cannot be anſwered, and ſo determine to follow their own Opinion, before means be uſed. A for Inſtance, ſome becauſe they find ſuch a particular evil in themſelves, or becauſe they have no perſwaſion that Chriſt wil countenance them in that Ordinance; do inconſideratly conclude they will not partake: but ſuch ſhould uſe all means within their reach, to know if theſe or the like Objections, be ſufficient argumens to keep them from the duty of Communicating.

5*thly*, When ſome are obſerved to withdraw from the Lords Table, if they be of ſober and Chriſtian converſation,

it's

it's uncharitable to judge them Hypocrites on that account, and to load them with Reproaches, as if they were all distempered, if they be not Hypocrites; for ye are discharged to judge. *Mat.*7. 1. 'Judge not, that ye be not judged.

6thly, Such as are of that Opinion, that all professing Christians should without debate be Communicants, should consider, that all Communicants are required to examine themselves, and accordingly act: and the Examination required, is in order to partaking, that he who examineth, may find clearness in his Conscience to partake: and without this, no man should approach the Lord's Table; that is, no man should partake, who in the mean time doubteth, whether he should partake or nor, 'for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin, *Rom.* 14. 23. I grant a Christian may partake, tho' he hath many other doubts; but he cannot safely partake while this doubt remaineth: therefore all means should be used, to have his Conscience convinced, that it's his duty to partake: It cannot be sufficient for a Christian, to say I am not clear to communicat, and so continue neglecting that Ordinance, if he make not Conscience of getting stumbling Blocks in his way removed; the man is guilty of his own bondage, who doth not what he justly may, to get his Fetters off.

And for your help I shall consider, and by the Lord's help answer some of these Objections, which I hear most insisted on and urged. As,

First, Some object, I am not a Believer, and therefore should not go to the Lords Table.

Ans. Some object this indeliberatly; is it easie to think thy self no Believer? Dost thou consider what will be the eternal lot of Unbelievers? sure this comfortless Conclusion should have very evident reasons. But it's to be Lamented, that some will very lightly object their not believing, when it may serve a turn, and keep them from a Duty they have no mind to, and yet little exercised, or grieved for the matter. You are easily satisfied not to go to the Lord's Table, but will not take pains conscientiously to examine your Faith,

putting

putting it to the tryal of God's word; but thou thinkeſt thou art no Believer, and there's an end, and thus thou mayeſt ſinfully neglect that Ordinance while thou liveſt.

2dly, Before thou doſt impartially examine thy ſelf, thou art noe ſure but the grace of *Faith* is given thee; and if it be given, thou art moſt ungrate to deny it: for a conſcientious Chriſtian doubting of his Faith, dare not therefore peremptorily ſay he hath no Faith, leſt he be injurious to the free Grace of God, not knowing but after ſerious examination, he may be enabled to ſay, 'I know in whom I have believed. 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. He finds it very uneaſie, to charge himſelf with a graceleſs ſtate, except the grounds were undenyable; therefore ſearch well, before you fix ſo comfortleſs a Concluſion.

3dly, Weak Faith ſhould not be lookt on as no Faith; for Faith admitteth of degrees, ſome are of little *Faith*. Mat. 6. 30. *O ye of little faith*. Some are of great faith. Mat. 15. 28. *Woman, great is thy faith*. And if you be of the very meaneſt, who have obtained like precious Faith acknowledge it to the glory of the Giver: ſee that your Faith be of that kind, which uniteth Chriſt and the ſinner. *Eph.* 3. 17. 'Tho' ye 'cannot ſay that ye are ſtrong in faith, yet if you have receiv-'ed Chriſt; ye have a right to the Childrens *Food*. *Gal.* 3. 26. 'By faith we are the Children of *God*.

4thly, See that you miſtake not the nature of ſaving faith, as if it were only a perſwaſion that you ſhall be ſaved; which is to follow after believing: if you cannot deny, but the deſire of your ſoul is toward him; then you have ground of comfort: for the people of God have comforted themſelves with this deſire. *Iſa.* 26. 8. 9. 'The deſire of our ſoul is to thy 'name, with my ſoul have I deſired thee. If God hath wrought this in you, do not deny the thing you find: What pleaſure have ye to deny God his due glory, and keep your ſouls in perplexity? Ye ſee the Children of God, have ſearched out their very deſires, and avowed them thankfully before the ſearcher of hearts, which is alſo your duty; and if you cannot deny ſome real willingneſs to have Chriſt as

he

he offereth himself, then a day of gracious power hath come to thy soul, for nothing could make thy heart willing but divine power, *Psal.* 110. 3. 'Thy people shall be willing in 'the day of thy power. God hath bestowed more on thee than only light, this is the Light of Life, therefore search it carefully if thy soul be made willing, and if thereby thou hast been opening thy heart for Christ: for where the heart is opened by willingness, Christ hath certainly performed his word *Rev.* 3. 20. 'He cometh in and suppeth with such. There is no willing opened heart for Christ, but he is in that heart: therefore I would say, despise not the day of small things, but that I dare not call any real desire or willingness for Christ small things; they are so enriching to every soul that hath them: the willing heart gets the *water of life*. Rev. 22. 17. and therefore a willing heart is a believing heart. Try also if thou findest thy soul leaning on Christ; that notwithstanding of all thy fears and doubts, yet thou still hangest upon him, thou canst not be rent from him, it's as death to think on separation from him: if thou thus depend and lean upon him, then he is the beloved of thy soul. *Cant* 8. 5. 'The spouse 'leaneth on her beloved. Tho' thy condition be as a Wilderness, because of griefs and fears; yet thou choosest him for thy alone. Stay, thou seekest rest to thy poor soul in none other but in him: then according to *Psal.* 2. 12. 'Blessed are 'all that stay on him, or trust in him. Thou comest to him for rest, neither able to bear thy self, nor thy burden; he will be as good as his word, *Mat.* 11. 28. 'I will give you rest. And thy coming, is thy Faith. *John* 6. 37.

Object. I cannot come to the Lord's Table, for I have no hope to be accepted of him, how can I expect to meet with Christ there, who for any thing I know, did never meet with him? How can I think to be accepted at his Table, for I do not find that ever he accepted of me?

Ans. This Objection is of weight, but savoury. For 1*st*, it relisheth a discerning of the true intent of that Ordinance, which is a blessed meeting with Christ, 2*dly*, Some remarking

of

of Christ's absence. 3*dly*, Some desire for that Meeting and Communion. And 4*thly*, A remaining grief in the soul for his withdrawing, and fear that they are not accepted: but to your Objection more particularly.

First, Take care you be not mistaken as to your acceptance, for by reason of our weakness, it's not easily discerned; you may be accepted of God, and not comforted, and you may be comforted, and not accepted: Christ may be near, and doing you good to a high degree, and yet your self not knowing he was near you, *Gen.* 28. 16. 'Surely the Lord is in this 'place, and I knew it not: and on the other hand, you may have delight in approaching to God, that is in the externals of duty, and yet be but proud hypocrites: as *Isa.* 58. Therefore take heed how ye judge of acceptance, for too many, and these not of the very worst, advance their comfort in prayer as a rule, thereby to judge of their acceptance with God, if they have freedom to speak, and some joy attending their speaking, though they know not whence that joy ariseth: for all may be meer nature or common gifts, for any thing they know, yet thereby conclude, God hath surely accepted of them, because at such a time, they had a great measure of joy and delight; but this Conclusion is not safe, except they can instruct and make it out, that it is the joy of the Lord, spiritual strengthening joy.

Secondly, Consider that you may be accepted of God, and answered in such things as are most necessary for you; tho' you be not answered in the manner ye would, if thy answer should be as *Pauls*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. 'My grace is sufficient for 'thee, thou art mercifully accepted, and answered; tho' the Thorn in the flesh be not presently pluckt out, ye may smart yet longer by its pain, and the grace sustaining you is your answer and proof of your Acceptance.

Thirdly, Your persons may be accepted, when some of your requests are not accepted: a *Moses* accepted into extraordinary nearness and intimacy with God, yet some of his requests are not accepted, so as to be granted, *Deut.* 3. 25.

I

'I pray thee let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan; *but vers.* 26. let it suffice thee, speak no more 'of this matter. Many Christians are too ready to conclude, that God hath no regard to them; because he granteth not what their hearts is set upon, whereas he is about to give them better things: *Canaan* was a pleasant land, but a meer triffle to that heavenly *Canaan* bestowed on *Moses*.

Fourthly, And supposing your requests were spiritual and necessary, for your souls good; yet ye are to wait for his answer: yea, tho' it tarry, wait for it: *Hab.* 2. 1. 'I will 'watch to see what he will say: thou thinkest there's no delay, thou art in a horrible pit, yet remember *Psal.* 40. 1. 2. *He* 'brought me out of a horrible pit: after he had patiently waited for him, a Song of Deliverance will at length clear all, that your selves were accepted, & your necessary petition recorded.

Fifthly, Yea it's safer for you to question the truth of your coming unto God, and the sincerity of your prayers; than the truth of his accepting such as come unto him, He having said he will in no ways cast out, *Joh.* 6. 37. It's too common, tho' a dangerous evil, to charge God with our own faults, and to complain of him for refusing, when we either ask not, or ask amiss: who dare say that they seek & search for God with their whole heart? But he is found of them, *Jer.* 29. 12. Who are put away that bring their hearts unto God? 'If thou dost 'well, shalt thou not be accepted? *Gen* 4. 7. Yet Proud Nature, will still blame God rather than it self.

Sixthly, Consider well on what account ye can be accepted of God, that it's only in the beloved Christ, *Eph.* 1. 6. Proud Nature hurteth us here also, prompting us to think, we may be accepted for our own sincerity, or fervency; &c. And so, acceptance with God is not sought in Christ's Name; and if not sought in his Name, by what warrant can we expect it? *Joh.* 14. 14. 'If ye shall ask any thing 'in my name, I will do it: it's not sufficient that mens judgements are satisfied it should be so; for many are not ignorant of this, who yet do not perform it; therefore as ye desire accept-

acceptance with God at any time, and especially at the Lord's Table, labour, *first*, To be found in Christ. *2ly*, Let all your Prayers be actually, and as distinctly in his name as ye can reach. *3ly*, Observe well what answer ye get, especially when your souls are bettered & strengthned in holiness after prayer, that ye may no more complain that ye have no acceptance with God, but enabled to say, as *Psal.* 66. 19. 'But verily God 'hath heard me, he hath attended to the voice of my prayer,' & then bless him as in the next verse. That he hath neither turned away thy prayer, nor his grace from thee. *4ly*, And finding that the Lord hath mercifully accepted of you, and your prayers, otherwise than ye thought, then be encouraged in the Lord, and say, as *Psal.* 116. 1. 'I love the Lord, 'because he hath heard my voice and my Supplications: and verse 13. 'I will take the cup of Salvation, and call upon 'the name of the Lord. And therefore *5ly*, When thou art at his Table, set thy Soul for accepting of Christ, and be not jealous of his Offer, for thou shalt have a blessed meeting. I may say of this Ordinance, as is expressed by the Prophet, pointing at Gospel-Ordinances in the latter dayes, *Ezekiel* 20. 40. 'This is the mountain of the height of Israel, 'and there will I accept thee: Here is a mercy-seat indeed, Christ revealed, as dying to obtain mercy for poor sinners, and on this mercy-seat he meeteth with his people, *Exod.* 25. 22.

Object. I cannot go to the Lord's Table, for I know that I shall not live suitable to engagements made there, I find it already to my grief, that all my former vows are broken; I will break no more engagements of that nature, better keep my self free of that Addition to my former sins, and pray that the Lord would pardon me for my unfaithfulness in times past.

Ans. It's to be supposed in charity, that you do not design to be unfaithful, if ye should communicat again, for ye appear to grieve for it; but for you to prophesie that it will be so hereafter, is a Limiting of the power and mercy of God? What do you know what is to come? for you may

have that at one Communion, which you never obtained before. 'Is the ſpirit of the Lord ſtraitned, that ye cannot 'be made faithful? *Micah* 2. 7.

2*dly*, It appears to have been your cuſtom, to truſt your ſelves with the keeping of your vows, for ye dare not truſt God with it; you think it dangerous to put your ſelves ſo far in his Reverence, as that either you muſt truſt him, or be treacherous, and therefore you will not expoſe your ſelves to that neceſsity of his help: Ah poor ſoul! wilt thou not be beholden to God for holding up thy goings? *Pſalms* 17. 5. 'Hold up my goings. Wilt thou not be beholden to him, for cauſing thee walk in his ways, and making thee faithful? *Ezek.* 39. 27. Cannot his mercy and grace preſerve thee, when thy foot is ready to ſlip? *Pſalms* 94. 18. 'When I ſaid, my foot ſlippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.

3*dly*, If thou be a Chriſtian indeed, and concerned in Chriſt, then thou art commanded to do this in remembrance of him. Now what ſort of a Chriſtian art thou, who dare ſay to him in his face, Lord, thou ſayeſt do this? But I ſay, I will not do this; for thy Objection runs ſo, I reſolve I will not communicat more; and giveſt thy reaſon, becauſe I will not come under ſuch engagements as I am ready to break; and becauſe thou canſt never Communicate but thou wilt come under ſuch Engagements, it's all one, as if thou had ſaid, I will never communicat. Chriſt ſaith, 'his yoke is eaſie, *Mat.* 11. 30. Thou ſayeſt it is ſo uneaſie, I will never put my neck more under it. Canſt thou hold up thy face and tell him ſo? Remember who ſaid *Pſalms* 2. 3. 'Let us break 'their bands aſunder, and caſt away their cords from us. Here is the myſterie; pretend what ye will, that the bonds of duty are troubleſome, and therefore theſe cords muſt be caſt away, and then we ſhall have ſome more liberty to do as we liſt: and thus thou makeſt a ſnare for thy own poor ſoul, thou lookeſt on thy duty as a ſnare to thee, but now thou art caught in a ſnare of thy own making, to ſin with eaſe.

4*thly*, Thou appears to think it unlawful to come under ſuch

such a bond, as if we should not make such engagements; how then sayest thou to that? *Psal* 76. 11. 'Vow unto the 'Lord your God and pay: there the Lord maketh it a duty. which thou refusest as evil. *Psal.* 119. 106. 'I have sworn and 'will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgements. It was never the way of godly men to say, I will engage no more to God, but their way hath been, to resolve on paying of their vows to God, *Psalms* 61. 8. 'That I may dayly per-'form my vows. And *Psalms* 56. 12. 'Thy vows are upon me 'O God, I will render praises unto thee. And therefore,

5thly, The best way is to lament and mourn for thy unfaithfulness, and yet resolve upon paying of thy vows, blessing God that there is yet a season for repentance: and if thou repents indeed, there will be a care for the time to come, that no duty be neglected; thou wilt be afraid to neglect communicating, but labour to prepare for it, because Christ hath made it a dutie, thou wilt not think that anie sinful omission can cure thy former evils.

6thly, Whereas thou sayest, that thou wilt seek for the remission of thy former failings which thou hopest to obtain, though thou never go to the Lord's Table. I answer, if thou obtainest pardon, it must be by the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. 1 *Joh.* 1. 7. 'The blood of Jesus Christ 'his Son, cleanseth us from all sin. Now in the Lord's supper, there is an offer of the benefit of this precious blood: and if thou deliberatelie refusest the application of Christ's blood, in the way that he hath appointed, it's just that thou should never get that precious blood applyed in thy way, since thou knowinglie refusest his way: For albeit the pardon of sin doth not absolutelie depend on participation of that holie Ordinance, but that he who believeth, eateth Christ's flesh and drinketh his blood, *John* 6. 54. And a Godly person may be in such Circumstances, as he cannot have the benefit of the Lord's Supper; yet the contempt of Christ's Institution where this Ordinance is administred, is a sin of an high nature; as it Christ had instituted it in vain: And

therefore I say it's just with God, to deprive thee of pardon in thy way, while thou despisest his way.

7thly, No Christian who observeth his own way, but will find cause of mourning, for being unsuitable to such holy priviledges and engagements: will it therefore follow, that no Christian who hath failed in his duty, shall again partake? Then the best of men might resolve on no more communicating, and Christ shall not have the publick honour due to him by it. But if you say, your unfaithfulness hath been very grievous and extraordinary? I still answer, you have the more need of the vertue of Christ's blood for Remission, which should be applyed in that special manner he hath required; and therefore thy duty is to repent, and prepare to shew forth the glory of Christ's love manifested in that holy Ordinance; and the greater thy transgressions be, the greater is thy debt to shew forth his death: by which death, only thou can be preserved from that second death which thou hast deserved.

Object. I cannot go to the Lord's Table for he hath forsaken me, he hath cast off my soul, he sendeth nothing for my good, and nothing doth me good, he hath left me to my own counsels; why then should I profane so holy an ordinance?

Ans. First, It's your mercy, if you can discern where the Lord either cometh unto, or deserteth your souls; for such as are utter strangers to God, know not the one by the other: if you had got no merciful visits, how had ye known these departings?

2dly, You may think your selves forsaken, because ye have not the comforts of Gods Countenance which sometimes ye had, and yet not be forsaken as to the influences of his grace. Jer. 20. 9. 'Then I said I will not make mention of him, nor 'speak any more in his name. Yet verse 11. 'But the Lord 'is with me as a mighty terrible One; my persecutors shall 'stumble.

3dly, You may utterly mistake, & think you are forgotten, when God sayes the contrare. *Isaiah* 49. 14. 'But Zion, 'said

'said the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgot-me. But ver. 15. 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, &c. And v. 16. 'I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.

4*thly*, If ever you had the favour of the chosen of God, If ever ye had testimonies of his love: Then whom he loveth, 'he loveth to the end, *John* 13. 1. 'and will never utterly forsake: but labour to have this sure, that ye have enjoyed the sanctifying mercies of the chosen of God. *Psalms* 106. 4. Pray for such mercies as these, lest it be as you fear.

5*thly*, If you be left as to influences of Grace, it is a bitter forsaking; yet some have been left as to Degrees of Grace, who were not totally forsaken, nor altogether deprived of Grace, as *Solomon* 1 *Kings* 11. 9.

6*thly*, The Lord may thus forsake, both as to Comforts and many degrees of Grace, and yet return again: 'For a 'small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies 'will I gather thee. *Isaiah* 54. 7. And *Micah* 7. 19. 'He 'will return again, he will have compassion on us.

7*thly*, It should be considered also, that we are often forsaking our God in a great measure, and then say he hath forsaken us: it's our wretched way first to fall back from him who is our life, and then what good we had begins to wither: which being discerned, in stead of blaming our selves for declining, we first begin and challenge God for forsaking of us, as if he were the author of all the hurt, and not we: O! how much doth he bear at our hands? 'Our way is to cast 'off the thing that is good. *Hosea* 8. 3. And then we cry out, *Why hath he cast us off*?

8*thly*, If the Lord should forsake us, yet we must not forsake him: he hath no need of us, but we have need of him: we cannot want him, but he may well want us: it doth not become us proudly to debate with our God, whether he or we shall first draw to other again, but it becomes us humbly to look up & wait for God, when he hideth his face, *Isa.* 8. 17.

9*thly*, And it's to be observed, that the Lord approveth most of these who pursue his mercy most closlie, when he

appeareth displealed, as having no regard to them: as is evident in the woman of *Canaan*, *Matth* 15.25. &c.

10*thly*, Besparing in thy complaints of God, and rather leave thy complaint upon thy self. *Job* 10. 1. 'I will leave my 'complaint upon my self. Remember he gave thee warning of old, 2 *Chr.* 15, 2. 'If ye forsake him, he will forsake you. Lay to heart how thou hast procured this unto thy self, *Jer.* 2. 17. 'Hast thou not procured this unto thy self, in that 'thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by 'the way? Remember how often thou hast turned the back on him, when he was doing thee good; acknowledge this thy sin, and that 'thou hast fallen by thine own iniquitie, and 'return unto the Lord thy God, as *Hos.* 14. 1. And if thou wilt take his counsel, hearken yet to what he saith, *Mal.* 3. 7. 'Return unto me and I will return unto you, saith the 'Lord of hosts. Bless God that there is yet any hope of a meeting again in mercie, 'draw near to God, and he will draw 'near to you, *Ja.* 4 8. 'Yea tho' thou hast played the harlot 'with many lovers, yet return again unto me saith the Lord. *Jer.* 3. 1. What wouldest thou have the Lord to say more? but sayest thou *I* need one word more yet, for I have lost all spiritual strength, I know it's my dutie to return to him, and praise him while I live, for this condescension ever to invite me anie more, that there is anie door of hope left open: but I cannot return to him, if I should never meet with him in favour; what then wilt thou do, wilt thou leave it so? Art thou resolved to forsake, and be forsaken? Ah poor sinner! who will be the Loser? Better for thee yet to hearken what he will say further to thee: remark then what is said, *Prov.* 1. 23. 'Turn you at my reproof, behold I will pour out my 'spirit unto you; set to your duty, endeavour to turn to him, and you shall have the help of his Spirit: Defer not then, but while he calleth entertain his kind Offer, and give it such an answer, as *Jer.* 3. 22. 'Return ye back-sliding Children, 'and I will heal you back-slidings: behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God: this will make a comfortable

fortable meeting again, to that thou ſhall not need to ſtay from his Table, 'as one forſaken of thy God, thou ſhalt be 'as tho' thou had not been caſt off, *Zech.* 10.6. 'He can ſoon 'make thy latter end better than thy beginnings. *Ezek.* 36. 11.

Object. I doubt if I ſhould believe, for I think my ſelf one of theſe who would not be the better, fearing ſtill I am none of God's Elect.

Anſ. If ſuch Objections were not framed to my hand, I ſhould neither form nor publiſh them: but being often propoſed, and particularly this fear of not being elected, and ſome ſouls diſtreſſed thereby, cannot paſs it altogether but for anſwer.

Firſt, You may as well ſay I doubt whether I ſhould be ſaved or not, as to ſay ye doubt whether ye ſhould believe or not; ſince he that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him: can you deliberatly think ye ſhould not deſire to be ſaved? This needs no refutation, I hope ye will be aſhamed of it,

2dly, Conſider you are under a command to believe, and to reject it deſignedly, is rebellion againſt God, beſides your own ruine: and what ſucceſs you can dream of in a courſe of rebellion againſt a merciful God, I underſtand not.

3dly, No revelation from God allows you to defer believing until you know you are elected; you muſt have this from ſome new unhallowed Bible, but neither from Old or New Teſtament.

4thly, The way to know of your Election, is firſt to believe; and if you have grace to believe, you are elected; and if ye be elected, ye will believe: For *Acts* 13, 48. 'And 'as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.

5thly, B what revelation do ye know that ye are not elected, anſwer this if you can? For though ye had lived a godleſs life to this hour, that will not prove it, for God effectually calleth the elect at what time he pleaſeth, ſome in their younger, and ſome in their elder age: What preſumption is this in you, to judge ſo preſumptuouſly of the Decrees of God?

God? For your great concern in Election, is to judge by its fruits, that ye are elected; and thus ye are directed to make your Calling and Election sure by the Graces of Gods Spirit, which are the Fruits of Election, 2 *Peter* 1. From the 5th verse to the 11th of that Chapter. But to make it your first question whether ye are elected or not, before ye believe, is a way of your own deviling, having nothing from God to warrant it.

6thly, Whatsoever tempteth yo to disobey the Command of God, is from a principle of darkness; but this tempteth you to disobey the Command of God, and therefore it's from a Principle of darkness: and whatsoever hath a direct tendency to separate you from Christ by not believing, you should take as proceeding from the same Principle, and so without further dispute to reject it.

7thly, Though Satan be so cruel to thy poor soul by his temptations; yet be not thou so cruel to thy self, as to hearken to him: but put it home to thy own Conscience, am not I a Sinner deserving the wrath of God? what course should I take? or whether can I go but to him who hath the words of eternal life, who directeth me to believe, and promiseth I shall be saved. *John* 3. 16. What should more, to raise thy indignation against all suggestions or temptations that oppose thy believing?

Object. Some say they cannot go to the Lord's Table, because of fearful suggestions and horrid temptations that go near to Blasphemie, which they cannot get out of their thoughts, and are ashamed to utter them to their dearest friends or relations: whereby they think themselves unworthy the name of Christians, or the society of men.

Ans. I shall premit a few considerations before anie particular answers be given; for the case of such distressed souls is sometimes the most distressing part of a Ministers whole work, how to minister a word in season, for their relief and comfort. For,

1st. They often conceal the worst of the Temptations which

which are most horrid, and are so disturbed with them, that they can hardly consider any thing that is spoken: they will appear to hearken to what a man speaketh, but in the mean time are busied in talking with their temptations; their adversary labouring to keep them so close at his work, that they shall hearken to nothing else, that being his interest and their hurt.

2*dly*, In some of these tempted persons, there appeareth no exercise of godliness, nothing but these dreadful Temptations sometimes vexing them: for great levity is found in their conversation, otherwise as being unconcerned for salvation; yet are they often frighted with Temptations tending to blasphemy. Others again who for many years have given good testimony of serious piety, yet are afflicted with Temptations no less horrid and hateful; so that this Tryal of being assaulted with such suggestions and Temptations, cannot of it self prove either a gracious or graceless state; and therefore cannot be spoken unto, as if they were all godly, which makes the difficulty the greater: for tho' tenderness be due to them, yet must not be flattered, as if these troubles of mind were proofs of true godliness: nor on the other hand, should the fearers of God be discouraged, as if such suggestions could make evidence that they are cast off of God.

3*dly*, Tho' there be great variety of these hellish temptations, which cannot all be named, nor expedient to mention; yet commonly the sum and scope of them, is to represent God as without mercy, and the Author of all their woes, that so God may be hated, & the poor tempted souls expect no good from him: this being Satan's great design.

4*thly*, Their temptations are sometimes so violent, that their understanding is in present danger, or their lives, or sometimes both; which increaseth the difficulty how to be serviceable to them in season, besides, that many of these tempted people, are found so fixed in their melancholly apprehensions, that whatever opinion they once conceive, either

either concerning their own temptations, or souls state, they are therein so tenacious: that except the very power of God accompany what is spoken, neither Arguments nor Exhortations will move them; I say, except the power of God appear, for sometimes his power hath appeared in blessing seasonable words for a relief unto them, which themselves have acknowledged; as for the Physicians part, and wherein they may be useful for correcting the excess of melancholie, I leave to themselves; but doubtless the Bonds of humanitie, and much more Christians sympathie, obligeth so far as we are capable, to endeavour their good: and therefore tho' I be verie unfit for such difficult work, yet having frequentlie occasion to speak with such persons, I shall humblie offer a few things to consideration as God helpeth.

First, Great compassion is due to such tempted souls, by praying for them, and with them as God giveth opportunitie; and not amiss to let them know our sympathie, that they may be the more encouraged to a free discovery of the very worst; it will not be found safest, only to chide them for having such thoughts, or to say you are very sinful for having them, because the distressed person will reply; such suggestions are my burden and misery, I cannot keep them out of my mind, and that you call me sinful for having them, you are of my mind: for I do not think there is such a monstrous sinner in the World as I whose soul is a receptacle for such suggestions: for fear of sin in having such thoughts is the poor mans anguish alreadie; and thus he findeth you adding to his grief.

2*dly*, After they have fully discovered their Temptations, or so much as they will reveal: sometimes by the blessing of God it's found very useful to let them know, that others have been as deeplie tempted as they and to as great evils as they, who now by the mercie of God are delivered; for it's a great ease to them if they can be perswaded that any others have been in the like case, and are at last cured: and when they do not much regard other things that are spoken, yet they

they will readilie hearken to this; and ſometimes urge to know it's certaintie with great importunitie: at which time it were not amiſs to gratifie them with ſome particular inſtances of ſuch perſons now delivered from their bondage; and albeit they commonlie think that no ſorrow is like to theirs, and that there are ſome evils in their hearts, that was never in the heart of any other; yet I have ſeen ſuch inſtances bleſſed for allaying the extremitie of terrour.

3dly, It were neceſſarie alſo to know the riſe and firſt beginnings of their diſquiet, if natural, or accidental melancholy and grief, hath firſt opened a door to their troubles, as alſo if their underſtanding or bodies begin to ſuffer; that means may be the more dexterouſlie and ſeaſonablie managed for their good, both as to ſoul and body.

4thly, It hath been obſerved to be ſometimes uſeful, to improve for their encouragement, any word that droppeth from them ſavouring of reſpect to God, and fear of ſin, for ſome of them do inadvertentlie let fall moſt ſavorie expreſſions, and where theſe 3 things are found, 1. Speaking honourablie of God. 2. Bitterlie againſt their own Sin, and *3dly*, Prayer continued, there is good ground to hope for a merciful Iſſue, *Lam.* 3 25. 'He is good to the ſoul that ſeeketh him.

5thly, It's neceſſarie alſo prudentlie to conceal what temptations they diſcover, for if they find them publiſhed, they will be readie to impart no more; and withal if their moſt frighting Temptations be publiſhed, the very ſhame of them may highten their anguiſh, and tempt to worſe.

6thly, It's expedient alſo, their friends take care, that they be not troubled with ſuch company as may increaſe their affliction, ſuch as are not prudent, but may be readie to quarrel them for ſome of their expreſſions, or poſſibly mock them, which will be to their grief: as alſo from ſuch company as are in like caſe with themſelves, and not yet healed of their wounds: but theſe who have been in ſuch trouble, and are now at liberty from their former bondage, are moſt meet for converſe with them, to declare what God hath done for their ſouls, *Pſal.* 66, 16. *7thly*,

7*ly*, Great prudence and caution is necessary to any friend of theirs, who would perswade them to go to the Lords table while under the violence of these Temptations: for to urge them without some composure of mind, and freedom in their own consciences, may have bad effects: the safest way is to use arguments for convincing them of their Duty, and if this cannot be obtained, better forbear untill God make light to arise, and they be more fitted for it: I have known some who being pressed by their friends; have been perswaded to go to the Lord's Table, but being there did not open their mouth either to eat or drink, which afterward raised their trouble to a great height, and are at this day under deep distress on that account: it appears then to conduce more for the good of such souls, to suffer them to wait for a more serene hour by the arising of the Sun of Righteousness, whereby the dark clouds surrounding them, shall be dispelled, and then in his light they shall see light, *Psal.* 36. 9.

And for such as are tempted, all of you are not in a like danger; and faithfulness requires to be plain with such of you as have never been concerned for your salvation, that your danger is great every way until ye flee to Christ as your refuge: and though ye hear that godly persons has been assaulted with horrid Temptations, yet that is no ground for you to think your selves godly, because ye have such Temptations, for ye may have their Temptations, but want such grace to resist them; if ye embrace not Christ and Salvation through him, ye expose your selves as a prey to any Temptation; having no interest in him who came to destroy the works of the Devil: Therefore cry to God to make you serious for salvation, to make you sincere Believers, and convert you to himself by his spirit of Grace; and the more ye are tempted, be the more diligent, make the greater haste, that ye may be found in Christ, by whom ye shall be overcomers: and who knoweth, but meat may come out of the eater, and he who goeth about as a roaring lyon seeking

to

to devour, be disappointed of his design, and thy affliction under these very Temptations be made by the over-ruling power of God, a mean to make thee flee to Christ for Salvation to thy soul, and deliverance from all thine Enemies, and if you will fix on this way for your relief, and all of you who have done so before ye came under these fiery trials, consider,

First, That blessed Jesus Christ was tempted himself, and tempted to the greatest sins, even to worship the Devil, God's great Enemy, *Matth.* 4. 9. And to destroy himself by being guilty of his own Death, ver. 6. By casting himself down from the Pinacle of the Temple. All this and more he subjected unto, and being carried by Satan from one place to another, that thou a poor weak tempted Believer might be perswaded, he knoweth the greatest and worst of thy Temptations. 2*dly*, That he will have Sympathy with thee as being tempted himself, *Heb.* 2. 18. 3*dly*, That he hath sanctified this trial to believers, by subjecting to it himself; for though the wicked Temptations be not sanctified, yet thy lot under them is thereby sanctified. 4*thly*, That he overcoming them all, thou in him as thy head, shalt also overcome: Therefore adhere still to him, and thou cannot sink, *Rev.* 12. 11. He who accuseth day & night is overcome *by the blood of the lamb.*

2*ly*, Consider, That there are some Temptations that are the Devils sins, rather than ours, not arising from our selves, nor entertained by us, are but the fiery Darts of Satan cast in by violence: If Satan should now appear or any other way should tempt a godly man, to renounce God and worship him, this godly man at the very first rejecting such temptation with indignation and hatred, is not guilty by that temptation, albeit the nature of the Temptation be most horrid and blasphemous; and albeit the same godly man have sin remaining in him, yet that Temptation is not his sin; because it neither had it's Original in his heart, nor in any measure entertained by him: therefore do not so far yield to the adversary, as to take with all his Temptations, as if they were your sins,

sins, for that's no small part of his design, thereby to terrifie you, as if ye were the most monstruous sinners in the World: the Apostle *Rom.*7.17. Finding a gracious principle in his soul against Sin, and Sin making war against the law of his mind, he can say of this Enemy that warreth against him, this enemy is not himself, it's no more I but sin that dwelleth in me: the tempted Believer may well say, it's not *I*, but Satan who tempteth me; and so much the more, because these Temptations had never that place in his heart that his Sins have: albeit it be afflicting to a child of God, that Satan should come so near, yet he is in all this but at War, not gaining nor yielded unto.

3*dly*. Therefore be sure of your resisting these Temptations from first to last, for voluntarie entertaining such suggestions would soon weaken your confidence, and strengthen your adversarie; therefore let all your thoughts be resisting thoughts, and then the temptation, and thou are still Antagonists opposite one to another, when thou art resisting, thou art still in Gods way for a victory, *Jam.*4.7. 'Resist the devil & he will 'flee from you. And whatever ye do, be careful to keep on Gods ground, keep by your post where God hath placed you, yielding nothing, 'and having done all, to stand, *Eph.* 6. 13.

4*thly*, Consider also, That we are not alone in this conflict, *Eph.*6.12. 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but a-'gainst principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the 'da kneſs of this World. And though all Believers have not a like violent Temptations, yet all of them have Satans Temptations to wrestle against, nor do ye know the temptations of many others, though your own smarts you most.

5*thly*, Whatever be your Temptations, know that God hath not left you destitute of Armour against them, *Eph.*6.11. 'Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to 'stand against the wiles of the devil. The very believing of this in thy heart, that God hath provided armour to preserve his people from danger, will be an encouragement to thee; but if thou think there is no relief, then thou faintest, and thereby thy Adversarie hath advantage; a fainting man is soon overcome

come, but if thou think in thy heart there is relief at hand, then thou waxeſt valient in fight: and if the hope of this armour be ſo ſtrengthning what will the putting of it on be; take counſel then from him who hath provided it, and put it on, for it was provided for ſuch as thee; and remark well what is ſaid, v. 16. 'Above all taking the ſhield of faith, wherewith 'ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the Wicked.' Chriſt's armour will be proof, though the Darts be dipt in Hell, they ſhall not conſume thee, though thy tryal be like a fiery Furnace, yet ſet thy ſelf to follow the footſteps of the Flock, who by Faith, 'quenched the violence of fire, *Heb.* 11. 34. And when thou art at the loweſt, labour ſtill to retain the impreſſions of God's omnipotence, think nothing too hard for him, do not ſo diſhonour him, as to think thy caſe incurable, *Jer.* 32. 17. Is there any thing too hard for me.

6thly, Give thy ſelf frequently to Prayer, and complain of the violence done to thy poor ſoul by thine Adverſary, hearken to no ſuggeſtion againſt prayer, for thy God commandeth thee to call on him in the day of trouble, and he will deliver, *Pſal.* 50. 15. Thou wilt be tempted to think it's in vain to pray: but believe not the father of lies, God hath not required to ſeek him in vain, *Iſa.* 45. 19. He will tempt thee to think thou art not the better of Prayers, thou art not heard; but what if thou ſhould be for a short ſeaſon, that thou could'ſt obſerve no anſwer of prayer, remember that better than you, have complained of the ſame, *Pſal.* 22. 2. 'O my God I cry in 'the day time, but thou heareſt not, and in the night ſeaſon, 'and am not ſilent; but was it always ſo? No, Mark what is ſaid in the ſame *Pſal.* *ver.* 24. *and* 25. 'For he hath not de'ſpiſed nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath 'he hid his face from him, but when he cried unto him he heard. And then follows a ſong of praiſe in the next verſe. I know of ſome at this day under deep delertion, and aſſaulted with ſome of the worſt of Temptations, but their condition is hopeful on this very account, becauſe they expreſly

expresly say if God should never hear me, it's my Dutie to pray, and I will pray: let no depths hinder thee, but pray the rather, *Psal.* 130. 1. 'Out of the depths have I cryed un-'to thee O Lord. & *v.* 4*th. It follows*, But there is forgiven-'nes with thee, & *v.* 7*th.* Let Israel hope in the Lord, for 'with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous re-demption. *It* should be observed, that where violent temptations do most hurt, commonly these tempted persons will not be perswaded to pray, and such as continue to pray, do ordinarly obtain a comfortable victory.

7*ly*, Resolve also to wait on thy God, for at his Command the storm is soon changed into a calm, 'Weeping may endure 'for a night, but joy cometh in the morning, *Psal.* 30. 5. A fixed resolution to wait on God, is both thy Duty, and will be a great advantage to thy soul, Remember *Ps.* 40. 1. I wait-'ed patiently, and he brought me out of a horrible pit. Give not way to sudden conclusions that thy hope is lost, and thou art cut off, as *Ezek.* 37. 11. make no unwarrantable prophe-sies that it will never be better with thee, if thou but resolve this on thing to wait, *S*atan shall be disappointed, whose great design is to have thee as desperate as himself; still leave place for the mercie and infinite power of God, 'Encline 'your ear, come yet unto the Lord, hear and your soul shall 'live, *Isa.* 55. 3. Let God have a hearing for shame, since Satans suggestions hath got so long hearing, God saith hear-ken to me, Satan saith hearken not to God, that thou mayest be another rebel to God as he is; but let thine Enemy know that thou hast an open ear for thy God. 'I will hearken what 'God the Lord will speak unto me, for he will speak peace 'unto his people, *Ps.* 85. 8. And if thou shalt say, Oh what can I hear? That will do good to me? No words can break Bars of Brass and Iron, I am bound and in a Prison, yet nevertheless, stay until you hear who speaketh, and what he speaketh, Therefore Consider,

8*ly*, That if you will hearken, you shall hear of doing for you, which is more than words, ye complain that ye are bound,

and

and cannot shake off your fetters; how then do ye like it to hear of one who is coming to open your prison, *Isaiah* 61. 1. 'The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord 'hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he 'hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim 'libertie to the Captives, and the opening of the prison to 'them that are bound. Sure this is worth the hearing, that Christ hath it in Commission to open such prisons, and 2*ly*, That he is able to perform his Commission. For he openeth, & who can shut, *Rev.* 3. 7. And 3*ly*, that his name is faithful who hath this work to do, *Rev.* 19. 11. Look up then O Prisoner of hope, for Satan endeavours still to have thee looking down, desiring to have thee fall down at last where he is, he knoweth that long and stedfast looking into a frighting deep place, is apt to turn a man giddy, and thereby endangered to fall into the same depth, so his great care is that thou never turn thine eye upward, knowing that to be thy relief: therefore be not befooled by him, but look up and be saved, *Isa.* 45. 22. Say as *Psalms* 142. 7. 'Bring my soul 'out of prison, that I may praise thy Name.

9*thly*, Mind also that thine Adversary is still in chains, and cannot go beyond divine permission. 'They are in chains of 'darkness, 2 *Pet.* 2 4. So also *Jude* v. 6. 'They are reserved 'in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the Judgement of 'the great day. And so we see nothing could be done by Satan against godly *Job*, but as divine power ordered and overruled, *Job* 1. 12. 'And the Lord said unto Satan, behold all that he 'hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thine hand, and *ch.* 2. v. 6. 'And the Lord said unto Satan, behold 'he is in thine hand, but save his life. So thou art not at thy worst, absolutely under his dominion, he is never out of the chain; thou art still under the absolute dominion of thy God, not an hair shall fall from thy head in this conflict, without a divine providence; keep the impression of this upon thy heart, for it is a grand design of the Tempter to have thee thinking, thou art now wholly in his hand without remedy,

he will tempt thee to think that God taketh no care of thee, hath no pity on thee, and never regardeth thee, that so he may draw thee either to some dislike of God as mercileſs, or to deny that there is any providence of God, and ſo carry thee on if he can to doubt if there be any God but himſelf, if he can drive thee to this, then his helliſh deſign is far ripened, then he tempts thee to think thou muſt obey him, thou art wholly in his hand: I have heard ſome acknowledge this was their temptation, but when Satan did drive hardeſt, he made but fools haſte; for that temptation became ſo frightning, that they were helped to hearken the leſs to any of his temptations, and ſo the Devil's malice over-run his policy; the Lord diſcovering the wickedneſs of his devices: For when poor tempted ſouls are at the very brink of ruine, and knows not what to do but yield all to the tempter, 'yet the Lord know-'eth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, 2 *Pet.* 2. 9.

10*ly*, Know alſo, that though thy temptations be verie dreadful, yet while God helpeth thee to continue reſiſting them as an hateful burden, under which thou groans, then thou ſtandeſt yet on God's ſide againſt his enemy, thou fighteſt againſt theſe temptations, as God's enemies and thine, then God will be for thee. *I am for thee*, Ezek. 36. 9. Faint not in his ſervice, he will not leave you alone, *Hag.* 2. 4. 'Be 'ſtrong, for I am with thee. He will not ſee thee periſh in his own cauſe fighting againſt his enemies, he will ſend from above, and draw thee out of theſe depths, though thine adverſary hath thruſt ſore at thee, that thou mighteſt fall, yet thou ſhall have it to ſay, 'But the Lord helped me, *Pſal.* 118. 13. And though thou be ſore wounded in the time, yet he will tenderly bind up theſe wounds, *Pſal.* 147. 3. Hold on the fight, and the Lord will teach thee to fight, *Pſal.* 144. 1. He teacheth my fingers to fight, and ye ſhall fight, becauſe the Lord is with you, *Zech.* 10. 5. Yielding is thy greateſt danger.

11*ly*, Do not gratifie temptations by allowing time to attend them, ſince thou art to pray that thou be not led into Temptation, then do not caſt thy ſelf into it by idleneſs, neglecting

glecting the Duties of thy Calling, set about thy work, whether thy Station lead thee to Employment of the mind or body, thou hast thy God and his service to wait upon, and hast no time allowed thee to attend his enemies and their service, if thou give the tempter time he will give thee work, he will strive to have thee so far engaged as to draw back from thy duty to God and man, and attend what he hath to say; if thou yield to this he has too great advantage: I know you are ready to retire from all company, & your ordinary affairs, & say ye are not capable of business; but see that many of your retirements, be not rather to talk with the Tempter, than to talk with God; I acknowledge frequent retirements for prayer are most necessary, but then take care that the time be not worse spent, advert to this especially in the beginning of thy temptations, that thou enter not the conflict with present sinning, by omitting of plain Duties to God, Relations or others.

12*ly*, And that thou mayest have the benefit of Christs coming to destroy the works of the Devil, 1 *John* 3. 8. And the comfortable hope that Satan who hath so b tiled thee, shall be shortly trampled under thy feet *Rom.* 16 20. Essay yet once more to believe, and in believing thou shalt see *the glory of God*, John 11. 40. When thou hast toiled and outwearied thy self seeking rest, yet thou shalt find it no where, but in Christ who inviteth thee to come and get rest to thy soul; which he promiseth to give, *Mat.* 11. 29. Here must be the end and conclusion, if thou desirest and expectest to enter into rest, for *Heb.* 4. 3. 'We which have believed do enter into rest.' Labour then through the throng of all opposition and difficulties to adventure on believing in Christ, as himself commandeth, *John* 14. 1. 'Let not your hearts 'be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.' Here is the true cure for a troubled heart, adventure on Christ's counsel, keep still by his word, for it's the Sword of the Spirit.

I know some who were almost crushed under violent and most dangerous temptations; in so much that friends were dejected, both because the Temptations were so strong that

they could hardlie be concealed, and a recoverie more and more hopeless: but one day that person by the tender mercie of God begun to think; that there's no mention in all the Scriptures of Christ's rejecting any poor sinner coming to him for relief, whereupon forthwith that person resolved to essay believing in Christ, whatsoever should follow; the Essay was no sooner made, but instantly the God of mercie gave a comfortable victorie over all these temptations, with encrease of Grace, and great joy attending the healing of these wounds, & yet continues of a Gospel becoming conversation, free of all these afflicting bonds: this I can attest for truth from the person's own mouth the next day after God had broken these Bars of Brass, and Iron. And judge it Dutie to publish it for the encouragement of poor tempted souls; that they may consider how signallie our gracious God doth countenance such as in the very throng of temptations, cast themselves and their burden upon the Lord.

Quest. But may I take any comfort in the hope that these frighting suggestions and temptations are not originallie from my self, it's grievous that they should be in my thought at all, but much more, if I be the Author of them.

Answ. 1. It's certain that our selves are the Authors of many temptations, *James* 1. 14. 'But everie man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

2*ly*, It's also clear, that Satan who is called the Tempter, *Matth.* 4. 3. Doth work upon mens own corruptions and promoteth the wickedness of them, so that the lusts of wicked men are said to be the lusts of the Devil, *John* 8. 44. 'And 'the lusts of your father ye will do. So he improveth the prevalent sins that men have the greatest propension unto, as the covetousness of *Judas*, and the excesses of mens passions, as grief to have them swallowed up with overmuch grief, 2 *Cor.* 2 7. 'Lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up 'with overmuch sorrow, and v. 11. 'Lest Satan should get 'an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices. And melancholie souls darkned with their own imaginations give great

great advantage, to the Rulers of the darkneſs of this World.

3ly, But temptations do ſometimes ariſe only from Satan, as to their firſt original, & therefore he is called the Tempter, *Matth.* 4. 3. Becauſe it's his work to tempt, and therefore tempted where there could be no hope of prevailing as appeared in his tempting of Chriſt.

4thly, And becauſe of our depraved natures, we are in danger of infection by theſe temptations, that hath their ſource and firſt riſe from Satan.

5thly, All temptations to evil ſhould be reſiſted, whether we know the firſt ſpring from whence theſe Temptations flow or not, our work is to reject them whether they be our own, or mixt with Satan's temptations or his onlie.

6thly, Some of theſe temptations that are immediatly from Satan, are called the fierie darts of the wicked One, *Epheſ.* 6. 16. So that the dart cometh from the Devil, and not from the mans heart, they are called fierie darts, being ſuddenlie thrown in for ſetting all on fire in the ſoul, whereby there is ſuch an unuſual diſturbance and ſurpriſing terror, as if all were in a flame, it being as death to them, finding ſuch ſuggeſtions againſt God, and their own Salvation, as they never found before, and theſe ſo raging that they know not where or how to hide themſelves from the furie of the Flame, theſe will be charged on Satan's account, Conſidering,

Firſt, That upon their verie firſt appearing and aſſault, thou meeteſt them with hatred, indignation, and horror.

2ly, Though they continue ſometime, yet they are no more welcome, than if fire bals were thrown into thy houſe to burn thee and it up together, thou giveſt no conſent to them.

3ly, As thou canſt, thou reſiſteſt them.

4ly, Thou lookeſt up to God to deliver thee.

5ly, If they remove thou rejoyceſt.

6ly, Thou art ſo far from cheriſhing of them, that their returning is thy great fear.

7ly, And any wicked ſuggeſtion againſt the honor of God, is paining to thy ſoul.

Theſe may help thee to underſtand, that ſuch helliſh blaſ-

pernicious temptations are the darts and sins of Satan.

Object. Some say, they dare no more presume to go to the Lord's Table: because when they did partake they are perswaded that they did eat and drink unworthily; so that it's not only an unsuitable deportment that they have to bemoan as to their practice afterward, but conclude that when they did receive, they did eat and drink Judgement to themselves; and therefore wish they had never received, I heard some say that they thought their communicating was the greatest Sin they ever committed in their Life-time; but then they were over-whelmed with other temptations, so that this was said in an hour of darkness.

Answ. Who can say, that they eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup so worthily, but that their failings are great in the very time of receiving, for which if God would enter into Judgement they could not stand? what humble man dare say his apprehensions of a crucified Christ were so distinct as ought to have been? or that his faith and love were acted to to that degree required? shall therefore the best of men on Earth, conclude that they did eat and drink unworthily, and so are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and leave his Table always with anguish, rather than rejoycing in God their Saviour, do you not see this a temptation, tending to the utter rejection of that blessed Ordinance of Christ?

2*dly*, Some of you who make this objection, cannot deny, but that you did make conscience of serious preparation, and that you desired with Reverence and Love to receive Christ himself, when you did receive the visible-signs, only ye had not that measure of faith and love which you desired, the worst you have to charge your self with was your weakness, not contempt nor was it ignorance, as to the discerning of Christ's body: but because your Graces were not so lively as they ought; I grant it's necessary to bemoan our failings, but this is not the place of our perfection, when that cometh, we shall not need to partake in such a manner as now, but while we are here, we must apply that precious blood, for purging

purging away the guilt we contract in our best actings, yea, in the very time of Communicating, we must apply Christ's Blood for the pardon of our failings in Communicating; so that your better way were to go again to the Lord's Table, and when you receive, learn and practise that way of applying that precious blood that cleanseth from all sin, to cleanse you particularly from any sin you are guilty of by your weakness in Communicating.

3*ly*, And know, that there is a necessity of distinguishing between sins of infirmity, & sins allowed: The Apostle *Paul* was constrain'd to make use of this distinction for his own comfort, when he saith, *Rom.* 7. 15. for that which I do, I allow not.

4*ly*, But supposing it were as you object, that you did once eat and drink unworthily, it doth not follow, that eternal Judgement shall be inevitable, albeit the sin be repented of, for the clearing of this a little, Consider, first, That it's granted, every sin deserveth Judgement, yea, eternal Judgement, and therefore, 2*ly*, This sin of unworthy communicating deserveth that judgement. 3*ly*, The Apostle by judgement here doth not understand only eternal Judgement, for he speaketh plainly of temporal Judgements inflicted for profanation of the Lord's Supper, *ver.* 30. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep, therefore he understandeth not only eternal Judgement. 4*ly*, Some partake of these temporal Judgements as chastnings, that they should not be condemned with the world, *ver.* 32. Yet these chastenings are for their sinful communicating, then it followeth, that some who are sinful in their manner of communicating, yet may obtain pardon, the Lord chastening them for not Communicating aright, that they may not be condemned with the World; though they deserved eternal Judgement by profaning that holy Ordinance, yet by free grace they are forgiven, God in his tender mercy reserving room for Repentance.

Consider also, that the Passover was a seal of the same Covenant of grace, and great sanctifying preparation requir-

ed

edor it's celebration, for every Partaker was to be sanctified unto the Lord, 2 *Chron.* 30. 17. But some had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the Passover otherwise than it was written, *verse* 18. But *Hezekiah prayed for them*, that the Lord would pardon such as prepared their hearts to seek God, 'though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary, *ver.* 19. 'And the Lord hearkned to 'Hezekiah, and healed the people. *verse* 20. Whereby we may see that sins of that nature, are pardoned when sincerely acknowledged, and application made unto the tender mercies of God. The knowledge of this is necessary for some, who fear their condemnation is inevitable, because of their not Communicating aright; but by these Scriptures ye may see that all shall not be condemned who have been guiltie by sins of that nature, where Repentance is, there is remission of sins by Christ, giving both together, *Acts* 5. 31.

CHAP. X.

Communicants obliged to review their Communicating.

The ninth Inference.

THis Ordinance being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood, then after partaking, Communicants are obliged to try if they have obtained that blessed communion.

Consider *First*, The reasons why this should be tried, and *Second*, A few helps how to perform it.

All Communicants should seriously examine the way of their own hearts, when they did partake, because,

First, It was our blessed Redeemer's way, after the first Celebration of this Sacrament, to set the Communicants in this Road of searching themselves, whether they did then believe or not, *Joh.* 16. 31. 'do ye now believe. This was demanded of them, when they had but lately risen from the Lord's Table: and therefore is a question that communicants ought to put to themselves,

themselves, and obliged to have a ready Answer, as these Communicants had, which is the more to be noticed, that after they had declared their faith, *ver.* 30. Yet *ver.* 31. Christ urgeth it again, that they may be deliberate, and know well what they say, when they say they believe.

Secondly, Our Communicating should be carefully reviewed, lest we did eat and drink unworthily: otherwise we shall be found despisers of that important warning, 1 *Cor.* 11. 27. That such as eat and drink unworthily, are 'guilty of the body and Blood of the Lord. Men have neither a due fear of the anger of God, nor regard to their own souls who having partaken, think there is no more to be done, not so much as to enquire whether they came from the Lord's Table guilty of his Body and Blood or not: for the best of men should take notice of the great regard God hath to Sealing Ordinances. The *First* thing we find godly *Hezekiah* considering after the Celebration of the Passeover 2 *Chron.* 30. 18. Is the transgression of the people, who did eat the Passeover otherwise than it was Written, for whom he prayed, and the Lord mercifully answered his prayer.

Thirdly, If the pains thou did take in preparation before Partaking was sincere, that thou might have a blessed meeting with Christ, then the same principle will lead thee to enquire if he did meet with thy Soul: for no man can be said to be earnest for that which he will not so much as observe if it be found, if Communion with Christ was the desire of thy Soul, then it will be thy desire now to be secured of it, that thou may'st say, I sought, and 'found him whom thy soul loveth, *Cant.* 3. 4.

Fourthly, If thou shalt find after searching, that thou did obtain real spiritual Communion with Christ, this will make thy Thanksgivings sincere, this will be a mean to endear him to thy soul, and increase thy Love, (which thou knowest hath need to be increased) when thou has it to say, he came and manifested himself to thy Soul, did draw thee into his fellowship, fed thee with the hidden Manna, whereby

thy

thy soul was revived; canst thou then but love and seek to have thy heart enlarged for more Love? This will also endear thy heart to this holy Ordinance wherein thou found Him, this will make thee forward in seeking occasions for it hereafter, because there the Lord appeared unto thee. This will help thee to be a good example to others, who are negligent in seeking after it; this will be a mean to endear to thee the promises, to thee the Lord promised to come and bless his People, where he recorded his Name, thou has found it even as he hath said, his words be true; now thou knowest it to be a meer Temptation to doubt of his Promise, or think that it faileth, now thou canst say, I will no more distrust any offer that Christ maketh of himself to a poor sinner, for as he offered, so I did embrace and am not disappointed; now thou canst Sing by experience, as *Psal.* 33 21. 'For 'our heart shall rejoyce in him, because we have trusted in his holy Name. Be perswaded then, of the clearness and necessity of this Duty, to review thy work at the Lord's Table, that thou may'st know what to conclude of thy self, whether thou may'st safely take comfort to thy Soul, as a sincere and accepted Communicant or not; for a mistake here is dangerous; if on the one hand thou judge thy self a worthy Communicant, and thy self but a stranger to Christ, this will harden thy heart in Sin, and render thee obstinate against all necessary admonition, and reproof, and thus you may go on adding to your guilt at every Communion, & remain impenitent; ye, thinking it improper for you to repent for any sinful Communicating, on the other hand, it's also dangerous for you to conclude your selves unworthy Communicants without sure grounds, or ever searching into the matter: for thus you may deny the grace freely given you, & belie the operations of the holy Ghost, and thus ye may deny God the glory due to him for his mercies, and cast your own Souls into perplexing disquiet and bondage: therefore there is much need to be guided of God in this Search.

And for the clearing of this a little: we are to Consider, both

both how it was with our Souls in the time of Communicating, and with what impreſſions and help, we come from that work as for our work in the time of that Solemnity, albeit by the word of God it may be declared how Communicants ſhould act, and if they have ſo acted, then they are not unworthy Communicants: yet no man can diſcover the internal acts of other mens ſouls whether they have acted as they ſhould or not: none can know that but God, & mens own Conſciences; Therefore when ye are to try your ſincerity at the Lord's Table, the Word of God muſt be your Rule, the ſpirit of God your Guide, and your own Conſcience a witneſs; for the utmoſt that can be ſaid by men is conditional, that is if you have acted ſuitable to the nature of the work, if you have embraced Chriſt, &c. Then you are accepted and not unworthy Communicants. 2. When Communicants are trying whether they have Communicated acceptably, or unworthily; they muſt diſtinguiſh between their being helped to perform the Subſtance of the work then required, and having their graces revived and elevated by the ſhining of God's face upon them; becauſe a believer may ſincerely receive Chriſt Offered to him in the Sacrament when there is not ſuch lifting up of God's Countenance upon him as at other times, a Believer may be under ſome deſerved rebuke even at the Lord's Table, and yet he cleaveth to Chriſt, though hiding his face, and affectionately embraceth Him, though his affections be not raiſed to that height that they have been and ſhould be. 3. There is great need of wiſdom from God, how to judge of the paſſions of mens ſouls in time of Communicating; for ſome men may have great flaſhes of Grief, or joy, at ſuch times, who know no ſuch thing at other times, or if they ſhould be ſo at other times, yet no better than the weeping of an *Eſau*, or the joy of an Hypocrite which ſoon periſheth: others again at the ſame work may have true Godly ſorrowing, melting down their hearts before the Lord in the Senſe of their Sin; and ſometimes the Joy of the Lord's true Spiritual comfort replenishing their ſouls, ſo that they find it unſpeakable, and theſe elevated affections having a ſincere

Root

hoor, flowing from indignation at sin or Love to Christ are most desireable; so that it should or will be painful to a Believer if he find not some gale of affections; suitable in some measure to the love he is receiving, and publishing at the Lord's Table: nor will it abate his regard to these due affections, that an Hypocrite may have the Counterfit of them.

Fourthly, Such Believers are doubt of their acceptance at the Lord's Table (which doubt doth often arise from people not being comforted at that time, or the lowness of their graces not acting vigourously when they were partaking) such Communicants I say, for preventing of disponding disquiet of mind, must in Reviewing their work. Consider if that which was indispensably necessary was performed, that is the souls receiving of Christ as He is offered in the Gospel, and offereth himself to His people in that Ordinance, if the heart was opened for Him, and He embraced; then the most Substantial part of the Work was performed: though there be Cause to Mourn that the affections were so low at such enriching and Honourable work; yet bless God if thou wast enabled to joyn thy self to the Lord: for the Ordinance is not profaned; and though thou wast a weak, yet not an unworthy Communicant. It may also contribute to thy comfort, if when thou comest from the Lord's Table thou findest in thy Soul. *First*, an Inclination to praise and exalt thy Redeemer, & for this particularly that he did not utterly forsake thy soul as thou knowest was deserved; and though thou had a Rebuke by the hiding of His Face as to thy Comfort, yet thou submits to it and does not cease to love Him, knowing that he can make a Blessing of that frown, to render thee more humble and diligent for the time to come. 2. If thou find a desire to hold fast what thou hast received: Thou art so far from having done with Christ, when thou has done at the Table, that thy heart cleaveth close to him; and so much the more if thou had any fear of his anger by withdrawing of his Comfort; if thou canst not stay from him, but must have some renewed Testimony of His Love, fear of His anger

anger being too heavy for thee to bear, *Job* 10. 2. *Psal.* 80. 7.

Thirdly, When thou comes from the Lord's Table thou findeſt upon thy heart a fear of ſinning, that thy Lord be not provocked more; and this fear is of any manner of ſinning, ſo that there is no Trial or trouble thou feareſt ſo much as ſin, and ſo much the more becauſe thou thinkeſt thy ſin hath provocked thy God already, thy indignation is now raiſed againſt all ſin as thy greateſt Enemy, making thee long to be Delivered from Root and Branch of it, *Romans* 7. 24.

Fourthly, If this thy Indignation at ſin, be Teſtifyed by thy watching againſt it, and all Temptations leading to it, though it were as Plucking out of the Right Eye, if thou find thy heart Purified, then thou has the Faith of God's Elect, the cleanſing vertue of Chriſt's Blood hath reached thy Soul, for nothing elſe could do it, 1 *Peter* 1. 19. 22.

Fifthly, If thou comeſt from the Lord's Table with this fixed on thy heart, that from henceforth whatever come in thy way, thou wilt Believe, let the Difficulty be never ſo far above thy ſtrength, thou wilt Honour thy Redeemer by Truſting Him with any thing without exception; thou has now Profeſſed thy ſelf a Believer, before Angels and men, and by Grace thou wilt act as becometh a Believer: thou feareſt ſin, thou feareſt Temptations, thou wants not fear, that the Burden of ſome Trials is ready to break thy Back: but now thou dare fear none of them with a faithleſs fainting fear, knowing thy Redeemer is ſtrong, and that thou art Solemnly Engaged to Truſt Him at all times. If this be the fruit of thy Communicating, then the Bond of the Covenant hath bound thy heart to thy Lord, then thy heart beareth the Impreſſion of his Seal, *Pſal.* 52. 8.

Sixthly, Since thou came from the Lord's Supper: obſerve what Gracious alterations are to be found in thy Soul and practice that were not found before: what thou can find of that exceeding great and Mighty Power, whereby the Lord worketh

worketh in them that believe, if thou has not only brought godly resolutions from that ordinance, but vertue and power, if thou can observe more of the *Spirit* of Power in thy duties, if there be any observable new spring that decayed Graces are revived, if thy sin be languishing, and Grace flowrishing, if whatever Holy work thou art engaged, in some vigour life and strength appeareth thou art not now desiring to shift clear Duties, thy heart and thy work go now together, which often before were far asunder; thou now takest delight in doing thy Lord's Will, thou can run now and not wearie as formerly; if this be found, then the Lord hath abundantly Blessed thy provision, thy meat hath been thy Blessing, and thou mayest now find it even as Christ said, *His flesh Meat indeed, and His Blood Drink indeed.*

I shall add but one word more to such, as still fear they did not Communicat acceptably even as to the very Substance of the Work, and cannot say they Believed when they did Partake.

Ans. This Fear is very afflicting; but some who find not Comfort at a Communion are so cast down, and so disturbed in their apprehensions, concluding the Lord hath deserted them; that they can see nothing for their comfort, and sometimes refuse to be comforted; having a strange kind of pleasure to harden themselves in sorrow, though they did Believe in the time of Partaking; yet now they have not an eye to see it: No wonder the Lord be sparing of his comforts to some people who so dote upon them, that the help of grace is not so much valued, if they want Comfort: be not so proud as to think ye deserve Comfort, nor so Ignorant as to think the LORD is not free to dispense consolations when He seeth fit, but not when ye think it fit; and learn to value the help of Grace more than comfort by it self, joy without Grace will deceive thee, therefore search yet if any sincerity can be found in thy Communicating, that thou mayest humbly and thankfully acknowledge it to his Praise.

Secondly, If after thou hast again tryed it; yet thou canst find

find no Faith in thy Communicating, thou art then to try it ever before that time thou didst sincerely Believe in Christ, receiving him as thy Redeemer and Lord, for if it was so, the Union then made can never be dissolved, 'For he that believeth hath everlasting life, *John* 3. 36. And by this Union, thou has an Interest in Grace to make thee Repent for sinful Communicating *Acts* 5. 31.

Thirdly, If neither before Partaking, nor in the time, thou couldst say thou ever Believed: Yet if thou shalt now believe thou shal be Saved, *Acts* 16 31. What ever hath been thy Guilt, the Blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.

CHAP. XI.

Communicants should live suitable to such Holy Communion.

The tenth Inference.

THis Holy Ordinance being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood: then Communicants are obliged to live suitable to so great a Benefit, and testifie their Gratitude, by a Holy Walk and Conversation.

The last thing to be Considered is, that after Examination of our way in Communicating, if we did truely Partake the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood; we are to endeavour a Practice suitable thereunto: and in order to this Holiness of Heart and Conversation.

I shall put you in mind of these four things.

First, A brief hint of that Conversation required. 2. That our performance should be early begun. 3. That Engagements and Vows be particularly performed. 4. That for Strengthening to the whole work required, our begun Communion with God be cherished and continued in that Holy walk which God hath Prescribed.

For the first, the Conversation required of us is,

First, To be blameless in all things, *Phil.* 2. 15. 'That ye 'may

'may be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God without 'rebuke. Stains on Communicants doth much obstruct the progress of Religion and true Godliness; it should grieve us much to be a comfort to the wicked in their wickedness, *Ezek.* 16. 54.

2. In a particular manner, our Conversation should be Just and Conscientious, 'Israelites indeed in whom is no guile. 1 *Thess.* 4. 6. 'That no man go beyond, and defraud his bro-'ther in any matter: It's true Godly men will be be reproached by the the wicked carry as they will; but then be sure their Accusations be false that so they may be ashamed, 1 *Pet.* 3. 16. It's a most wounding reflection on Religion, if an ordinary Communicant shall be found in unjust Practices.

3. Our Conversation should be meek and lowly, this being a Bright Ray of Christ's Image, which he requires us to learn of him, *Matth.* 11. 29. It's the very best Ornament of a Christian that all should be cloathed with, though it be most difficult to proud nature yet must be Learned, otherwise God will look upon us afar off; but he dwelleth with the humble, *Isa.* 57. 15. His dwelling with such should suffice to make us love it.

4. Believers must walk Circumspectly, and be watchful in all things, *Eph.* 5 15. Sins within us and temptations from without are never wanting move where we will in this world; Therefore we must be always on our Guard, which was Christ's Solemn Counsel, *Mark* 13 37 'What I say unto 'you, I say unto you all, Watch. We cannot spend a Day nor an hour of a day, without sin and loss to our Souls if this Direction be not followed, our unwatchful hours bring many woes for many days which we cannot shake off; but the watchful Christian is the Blessed Servant in Christ's account, *Luke* 12 37.

5 Our Conversation should be ordered and designed for Edification, *Rom.* 15. 2. 'Let every one of us please his neigh-'bour for his good to edification: We must not say with *Cain, am I my brother's keeper*: we are required to do good to all men

men as we have Opportunity, *Gala.* 6. 10. 'What a bitter farewell to the World ſhall that man have, who when he muſt go hence hath that to take to the grave with him; here is a man leaving the world, who never did good but hurt to the ſouls of men whom he leaveth behind him.

6. Our converſation ſhould ſavour of Communion with God, and ſpiritual heavenly things, *Phil.* 3. 20. 'Our con-'verſation is in Heaven. We ſhould learn to be more as ſtrangers on Earth, thinking and ſpeaking more of our better Countrey, and comforting one another with the hope of it, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 18. We have no cauſe to be aſhamed of our Countrey, it's well if it be not aſhamed of us; yet many of us now a-dayes appear aſhamed to ſpeak of Heaven or heavenly things, leſt we be thought either too Religious, or Hypocrites; but the matter is that heavenly Meditations and Affections abound not in our hearts, and therefore the mouth ſpeaketh ſo little of them.

7. Our walk ſhould be ſuitable to Goſpel-promiſes and Priviledges, that the World may ſee neither our hope nor portion is in this life: the Believers 'inheritance ſhall be for 'ever, *Pſal.* 37 18. And therefore ought not to be caſt down with worldly loſſes, but learn to be content in every State, knowing how to be abaſed and how to abound; the Believer ſhould Rejoyce in Hope of the Glory of God, knowing that he ſhall be ſhortly above all the griefs and Comforts that this World can give; and therefore ſhould go through his Journey cheerfully, in hope that he ſhall ſoon Reſt from his Labours, and deſire nothing but what he ſhal poſſeſs, *Heb.* 4. 3.

Theſe are a part of the ways that thou art Engaged to walk in having taken the Seal of God's Covenant: thou art in a ſpecial manner bound to all the Duties therein required, but thy Comfort is that the ſame Covenant alloweth thee help to perform, and He whom thou haſt Received, hath all the fulneſs of the God-head in him, *Col.* 2 9. *Joh.* 1. 16.

2. Enter thy work early to pay thy vows, lest thou forget them, and so render thy guilt great, lest the present sense of thy Obligations go off thy heart; defer not a day, for many Christians come to loss after Communions by trifling away time, untill the Edge go off, and their hearts are cooled again, and so much cooled that they are nothing like what they were, 'when their hearts burned within them in Communion with Christ, these Disciples mentioned *Luke* 24. 32. Were wise in this that they improved the Season of their Mercy, feeling their hearts to burn within them they would not part with Christ, but *verses* 28. and 29. Albeit he made as though he would go away, they constrained him to stay with them, unto which he graciously yielded approving their diligence to have their mercy continued; 'Keep your 'selves in the Love of God, *Jude* 21. And remember that these Disciples who fell asleep presently after Communicating, the next thing we hear of them was forsaking their Master.

3. As thou art to begin thy work early, so engage in it effectually and particularly to follow the Lord fully; Remember before thou came to the Lord's Table, when thou was examining thy heart and practice, how many sins then appeared and how hainous, insomuch that thou thought it hard for thee to approach the Lord's Table lest thou should profane it, and durst not resolve or partaking untill thou hadst resolved and engaged against such and such particular sins, as for Instance thy pride and seeking of vain glory to thy self, polluting lusts, over reaching of the simple, wasting of time in company without necessary occasion, thy being often ashamed of thy Lord's words, rather complying with, than rebuking of evil, thy offensive passions, fretting at thy Lot, thy fainting in time of trial, thy earthlines of mind, thy frequent neglecting of prayer, thy luke warmness in it; thy neglect of Meditation on the state of thy Soul, thy wearying of Sabbaths or the holy duties then required, thy Ingratitude for many signal Deliverances and Mercies, thy being undu-

tiful

tiful either to the souls or bodies of thy Relations, or to the poor, the bad example thou often giveſt to thy family, and the like ſins, if all theſe or any ſuch evil were wounding to thy Conſcience, acknowledged to God, lamented and engaged againſt, as in the ſight of God when no mortal Eye was witneſs, and with this engagement on thy conſcience to reform thy ways, to endeavour all duty, and caſt away all thy Tranſgreſsions by the help of Grace, if thus thou came to the Lord's Table, and there ſolemnly renewed thy covenant with God, 'avouching him that day to be the Lord thy God, 'and to walk in his wayes, *Deut.* 26. 17. And in Teſtimony of thy conſent to all the Articles of the Covenant of Grace, didſt receive the Lord's publick Goſpel-ſeal? Then know that God will call thee to account for thy Obſervation of this Covenant, take care leſt thou be charged as theſe, *Pſal.* 78. 36. 'Nevertheleſs, they did flatter him with their 'mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For 'their heart was not right with him, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his Covenant. Take heed ye be not as theſe who ſaid they would nor tranſgreſs; and yet are found wandring from God and playing the Harlot everie where, *Jeremiah* 2. 20. And that ye may be ſtedfaſt in your Covenant with God, and faithfully performing your vows, that ye may ſhine more and more bright unto the perfect day, and continue that bleſſed Communion with Chriſt which is begun. Reſolve on a true walk with God: This honourable walk is often mentioned, and diverſe ways expreſsed in Scripture; whereby the Lord condeſcendeth to our weakneſs for our good, that we may the better underſtand how to manage this walk, As,

Firſt, Walk in Him, *Col.* 2. 6. 'As ye have therefore 'received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him. What a wonderful walk is this, to walk in Chriſt! Who can underſtand this if it be not given from above? Yet they are the Words of God diſcovering our Duty, our priviledge and our greateſt help for this holy walk. *Firſt*, Our Duty ſtill

to abide in Christ, never to go from him, to any hand, to have all our way consisting with Communion with Christ, to admit willingly of nothing, but that which He will admit of in fellowship with Him; that so our fellowship may be continued. 2. Our Priviledge in partaking of so great Happiness as to be Interested in His Favour, His Love and care, and Blessed with such nearness as to have Him for our Habitation, where we may live and walk at a Holy liberty. 3. Here is our greatest Help, and the very Fountain of it, if all ordinary Cisterns were dried up, the Believer shall Live by the Fountain it self, because Christ Lives, He who is in Him shall Live also: The Believer Liveth upon Christ and His Fullness, there he hath Grace to make him Love this Holy walk, and hold up his goings in it.

2. Walk with God. *Micæ.* 6. 8. 'Walk humbly with thy God. Let none be so profane as to say are not these one? to walk in Him, and to walk with him, and what need is there for Expressing this walk so many ways, for they are the Words of God and therefore all to be Regarded. This walking with God is a Testimony and *Proof*, of our being agreed with him; otherwise there could be no walking with Him: For He 'putteth away all the wicked like dross, *Psal.* 119. 119. The Lord conferreth this honour upon upon Believers, that being now reconciled by the blood of Christ, they may draw near with some Holy confidence, and without Presumption walk with their God: though it must be humbly, because He is God, and we but dust: nor is it possible to keep up this walk without Humility, for the proud in heart are an Abomination to Him: and the rareness of true humility maketh this walk so rare. 2. It's to walk with God, that is in His way not in our ways; we must attend Him in His own ways not expecting to walk with Him in our sinful ways: this is the more to be regarded, because we would willingly have God to be with us in our own way, to own and countenance us, in the way of

our

our own chusing; when there is little care taken to be w
God in his ways, but we cannot walk with Him out of H
own way; and as we would have Him to be with us, so we
should take care that we be with him, 2. *Chron.* 15. 2. 'The
'Lord is with you while ye be with him.

3. Walk before me, *Gen.* 17. 1. 'I am God Almighty,
'walk before me and be thou perfect. 1. To walk as being
under Gods all-seeing Eye, which is a great help to a holy
walk, labouring to do nothing but as being content God be-
hold it, setting the Lord always before our eyes, or as the
Apostle expresseth it, I forsaw the Lord always before my
face, *Act.* 2. 22. Blessed is the man who frameth all his way
for that Omniscient Eye. 2. To walk before Him, is not
only to be impressed with His discerning all our ways; but
to set Him before our eyes as our all-sufficient God and help;
Believing in our hearts that *He* can strengthen, and bear us
up in all the difficult steps of our walk. 3. To walk before
Him or before His Face, is to Encourage the Believer that
not only God can help; but that *His* Eyes Mercifully upon
His People, observing all their necessities and weakness,
and the need they have that His Gracious Power be forth-
coming to them; He hath them still before His Face
or Eyes: all which are strengthening for this Holy
walk, and keeping up Communion with God, yea
walking before him in a Believing manner, is the w
bring us nearest unto Perfection; walk before m
be thou perfect: and this should be the Study of
Believer, to be always making Progress toward Perfe
the very endeavouring of it is also a great help to th
walk.

4. We are to walk after God, *Deut.* 13. 4. '
'walk after the Lord your God, and fear Him. T
ing after Him is; that we may not mistake our
forgetting our due distance, but understand that
ty, no priviledge, no intimacy granted should pu
what he is, and what we are; it's the Honour o

…Children, Followers, *Eph.* 5. 1. 2*dly*, We are here… …that walking after Him, is to fear him and keep… …Commandments; this must be in every step of our walk, no… …pretence of a good Design, no Invention of our own without… …Command, will agree with this walk. 3. When the… …Believer is admitted into true Fellowship with God, yet he is… …to follow on for greater nearness, and at the neareſt in this… …Life is to follow for more; and the more near there is ſtill… …the more of theſe Infinite Excellencies Diſcovered, that… …makeſh the Believer's Communion with God ſtill a fol-… …lowing after Him, *Phil.* 3. 12. 'Not as though I had… …already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow…

…We muſt walk as Chriſt walked, 1 *Joh.* 2. 6. 'He that… …ſaith he abideth in Him, ought himſelf alſo ſo to walk, even… …as he walked: we muſt not ſhut our eyes, upon the Holi-… …neſs of this walk required in this Scripture, and muſt not… …excuſe it by, ſaying it's impoſſible for us to Imitate Chriſt, O… …that prejudice againſt the holineſs of this walk, did not more… …obſtruct our Imitation, than that Chriſt's *Practice* was in… …many things Inimitable; for though it be true that no man… …ſhould ſinfully to preſume an Imitation in all things, or to attempt… …thoſe impoſſibilities, yet it's no leſs true that we are Oblig-… …ed to learn by Chriſt's Practice and Example, wherein He… …is imitable. For *Matthew* 11. 29. He requires us to learn… …of Him, for ſaith He, 'I am meek and lowly in heart. The… …thing is to learn by His Example; there is the greater… …Reaſon to Regard this, becauſe no man can Love Him, and… …endeavour to be like Him, ſo far as is imitable, in hope… …to be more like Him ere long when He ſhall appear,… …1 *Joh.* 3. 2. Conſider then O Chriſtian His diligence… …in almoſt doing good, His not ſeeking His own Glo-… …ry, His Patience both towards His friends and foes,… …His Meekneſs and Sweetneſs, His ſubmiſſion to His Fa-… …ther, His Diligence in Prayer, ſometimes con-… …tinuing all Night in it, *Luke* 6. 12. How much… …ſhould

BV824
.C73
1698
Copy 1
Rare Bk Coll